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THE ROLE OF PRIMARY LANGUAGE IN KINDERGARTEN
INTERACTIVE JOURNALS

A Project
Presented to the
Faculty of
California State University,
San Bernardino

In Partial Fulfillment
of the Requirements for the Degree
Master of Arts
in
Education: Bilingual Cross-Cultural Option

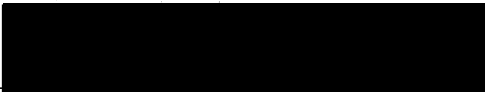
by
Margie Zamora Estupiñan
December 1993

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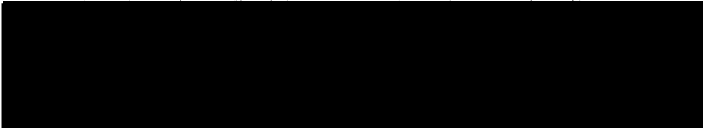
A Project
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Margie Zamora Estupiñan
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Approved by:


Dr. Kenneth Johns, First Reader

8-31-93
Date


Dr. Esteban Diaz, Second Reader

8-31-93
Date

ABSTRACT

The purpose of this project was to evaluate the writing progress of students whose primary language is Spanish. Students whose primary language is Spanish may only receive writing instruction in terms of copying the letters in the alphabet when they enter kindergarten. Progress may seem slow and limited. However, examination of their writing patterns using interactive journals showed definite progress and an increased understanding of written language. The changing shift of whole language instruction has resulted in the lack of research done on the writing development of students whose primary language is Spanish in kindergarten. The writer felt this was an area that needed further exploration.

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Most of all, special thanks to Dr. Barbara Flores, who shared her wealth of knowledge and continues to guide us in the changing shift of whole language instruction.

Finally, thanks to my family, with the support, patience and help of my husband Frank, my daughters, Francine, Marina, Marsha and Elyse, the completion of this project has been possible.

But, most of all, a special thank you to Terri for all her help.

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CHAPTER 1

INTRODUCTION

The desired outcome of public schools is to produce communicative competencies in both social and academic contexts. Because of the diversity of cultural, linguistic, and schooling backgrounds of students, teachers must not only motivate their students to succeed, but must also direct the development of students' linguistic competencies. According to California Association for Bilingual Education (1992), there are approximately 1.75 million students enrolled in California's public schools who come from homes where a language other than English is spoken.

Language is a means of communication. The written language is also communication. In recent years there has been an evolution in understanding how children come to know written language. The social contexts for teaching and learning (Vygotsky, 1978) are the most important for facilitating how children come to know the written process of language in Spanish and English. With the growing number of language minority students the need to use their primary language is important.

In bilingual programs where minority students' first language skills are strongly reinforced, success appears to reflect both the more solid cognitive

academic foundation developed through intensive first language instruction and the reinforcement of their cultural identity (Cummins, 1989).

In a bilingual, whole language classroom, teachers make every effort to develop the students' first and second languages. Teachers develop student's oral and written language proficiency by creating contexts for learning. A particular authentic use of written language is entered in daily interactive dialogue journals (Flores, 1990).

Journal writing offers both students and teachers a means of engaging in authentic written communication instead of practice exercises with little meaning. Through the interactive dialogue journals students develop a relationship with the teacher that is mediated through the continuous writing. This type of writing supports the notion that writing is a social activity (Vygotsky, 1978). In addition, the student has control of the writing, but begins to view writing as an authentic means of communication (Ulanoff, 1993).

The purpose of this project is to examine the writing development of Spanish-speaking kindergarten students over a nine-month period (from September to May) to determine the role of the primary language. This study looks at authentic writing samples in the

form of interactive dialogue journal entries of four Spanish-speaking kindergarten students to examine the writing strategies of Spanish-speaking kindergarten students. One way to document Spanish-speaking students' developmental progressions and strategies is through the use of daily interactive dialogue journals (Peregoy and Boyle, 1990).

A second purpose is to determine what role the primary language played in the use of daily interactive journals to acquire literacy.

Background to the Problem

The world in which children live in is filled with print. Children can identify many of the signs and logos that are all around them even before they start school (Bissex, 1980; Edelsky, 1986; Ferreiro, 1978). Children learn quickly that the print in their environment has meaning. They expect written language to be meaningful or to be related in some way to the situation in which it occurs (Goodman, 1986). Research has shown that when children are immersed in literate environments they take charge of their own literacy development by constructing the rules of written language in use in the same manner as oral begin to write, they produce visible marks that put their hypothesis of the very meaning of their graphic

representation by drawing, scribbling and various other forms of writing that gradually begin to approximate conventional writing (Peregoy and Boyle, 1990).

Children develop fluency in a meaningful social context by using writing in real meaningful ways, they are allowed to engage in their own processes of figuring out how writing works by seeing it used, by observing adults demonstrating how writing is used and by socially constructing the knowledge (Halliday, 1978; Vygotsky, 1978).

The Problem

According to Goodman (1986), children learn to write in much the same manner that they learn oral language and they learn to read and write because they need and want to communicate. Therefore, it is important to realize that written language has all the characteristics of oral language. Success in writing is accomplished by the teachers' providing authentic literacy events. Interactive dialogue journal writing requires that meaningful communication be shared between the participants (Goodman & Goodman, 1981).

Many children have problems learning written language at school. Goodman (1986) states that it is not harder than learning oral language, or learned differently, but has been made artificially difficult

by well-meaning teachers who isolate print from its functional use. Teachers do this by teaching skills out of context and focusing on written language as an end in itself. This makes the task impossible for some children, especially Spanish-speaking students.

Many times children come to school with a strong primary Spanish home language, but once in the social setting of the school, these children will attempt to use English as a means of communication during interactive dialogue journal writing. However, the use of English seems to make it difficult to convey the meaning of the written text, especially for Spanish-speaking kindergarten students. Therefore, journal writing in the Spanish language seems to make these children more comfortable in the area of language development and written communication of ideas.

Statement of the Problem

What role does the primary language play in the use of interactive journals with Spanish-speaking kindergarten students?

Research Questions

Will the use of interactive dialogue journals increase the quantity and quality among Spanish-speaking kindergarten students?

Do those students who attempt to write in

predominantly Spanish do better than those who attempt to write in English?

Definition of Terms

This study requires the use of the following terms:

Bilingual Education

Use of more than one language for instruction, but can differ in structure and emphasis. By using the students' primary language school subjects are made comprehensible to students who are limited in English.

CALP

Conversation and Academic Language Proficiency Cummins (1989) has termed "academic" language proficiency as the ability to make complex meanings explicit in either oral or written modalities by means of language itself rather than by means of paralinguistic cues, such as gestures, intonation, etc.

Whole Language

According to Goodman (1986), whole language is more a philosophy than a methodology. It is about children becoming literate in a whole real context - learning to read by reading, learning to write by writing. Whole language learning assumes respect for language, for the learner, and for the teacher. The focus is on meaning and not on language itself, in

authentic speech and literacy events. Learners are encouraged to take risks and invited to use all aspects of language which include reading, writing, speaking and listening. Language usage in all its varieties for their own purposes. In a whole language classroom, all the varied functions of oral and written language are encouraged.

Interactive Dialogue Journals

Writing in a journal gives bilingual children an opportunity to use language authentically in a literary context. Interactive journals insure that children and teachers will communicate on a daily basis with self-selected topics. The primary goal of interactive journal writing is communication. The control of mechanics evolves during this authentic literacy event. Student and teacher communicate their ideas and feelings in their first or second language. Journals also provide teachers with a developmental record of each child's writing (Flores and Garcia, 1984).

Zone of Proximal Development

The way children approach problem solving are socially mediated through formal and informal interactions with members of the culture group within what Vygotsky (1978) described as the "zone of proximal development." He defined it as "the distance between

the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 86).

Authentic

The differences between authentic and inauthentic writing according to Edelsky and Smith (1984) is that a person to be engaged in genuine writing the four interacting systems of written language must be used interactively and interdependently to produce meaningful text. The four systems are: graphophonic, syntactic, semantic, and pragmatic. In authentic writing, the pragmatic system is not separated from the other three. A writer's purposes and intentions, part of pragmatics, have graphophonic, syntactic and semantic consequences. In school writing, either one or more systems of written language are often missing altogether, as in workbook exercises, or the connections between the pragmatic system and the other three are distorted or severed. Journal writing requires that meaningful communication be shared between the participants. If one of the participants does not comply, then communication is lost or meaningless.

CHAPTER 2

REVIEW OF THE RELATED LITERATURE

The use of interactive dialogue journals in a whole language bilingual classroom is primarily to communicate, giving children the opportunity to use language authentically. Does the use of interactive dialogue journals increase the writing ability of Spanish-speaking kindergarten students, and if so, what role does the use of the primary language have in comparison to the use of the second language?

Literature Related to Writing and Social Interaction

...writing has been considered primarily a school-related activity... while children learn to speak in the context of meaningful interaction with a great deal of assistance, writing has been considered a solitary activity, occurring without communicative support...(Peyton, 1988, p. 90).

Reading and writing occupy an important place in education. Despite the various methods used for teaching writing, a great number of children do not learn. Traditional educational practice views writing, according to Emig (1983), as a process that is linear, where children are taught to write atomistically, from part to wholes (e.g., letters, sounds, words, etc.) in a silent and solitary activity.

In contrast to the traditional educational pedagogy, new knowledge has evolved that has changed

the thinking of how children come to know the written language. This knowledge is based on the four major positions:

- 1) Sociopsycholinguistic (Goodman, 1986; Goodman, K. & Goodman, Y., 1979, 1981);
- 2) Socio-cultural (Vygotsky, 1978; Diaz, Moll & Mehan, 1984);
- 3) Psychogenic (Ferreiro & Teberosky, 1982); and
- 4) Sociopolitical (Freire, 1970; Shor & Freire, 1987) paradigms.

This new knowledge has caused a shift from a "transfer of knowledge" pedagogy which Freire, (1970) refers to as the "banking" concept of education. Education becomes an act of depositing. The students are the depositories and the teachers are the bankers. Cummins' (1989) description of the transmission model of education, also views the teachers as having all the knowledge about writing who will pass this knowledge to the students. The shift is towards an empowering pedagogy.

The teaching of the written language and whole language are like regional dialects; they share major structural elements. Meaning has always been on center stage in both whole language and development of writing. Edelsky, Altwerger and Flores (1991) define

whole language based on the following ideas:

- a) Language is for making meaning.
- b) Written language is language.
- c) The cuing systems of language (phonology in oral, orthography in written language, morphology, syntax, semantics, pragmatics) are always simultaneously present and interacting in any language in use.
- d) Language use always occurs in a situation.
- e) Situations are critical to meaning-making.

Bissex (1980), Dyson (1985), Ferriero and Teberosky (1982), Goodman and Goodman (1979) and other researchers have shown that children learn written language as they learn oral language through hypothesizing about various aspects of the written system.

Vygotsky (1978) in support of a notion of writing as a social event, discussed the development of writing as it relates to both the child and the context within which writing develops. Interpersonal interactions are embedded in social and cultural process where cultural tools (speech, writing, drawing, etc.) are used. Vygotsky states that "...children should be taught written language, not just the writing of letters" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 119).

In support of this view, Ferriero and Teberosky (1982) state that writing is not copying a model. It is active interpretation of the models of the adult world. Although far removed from the conventional writing, when children begin to write, they produce visible marks, putting into play their hypotheses about the very meaning of graphic representation.

Therefore, it is important to examine the way in which children acquire knowledge of the written language, Ferreiro (1982).

The process by which a child arrives at an understanding of a particular type of representation of spoken language, e.g. alphabetical writing, cannot be reduced to the establishment of a series of habits and skills, however complex. In this learning process the child's linguistic competence and cognitive capacities play a part....written language is as much part of the environment as are other cultural objects, and it is difficult to imagine that they wait until they go to elementary school before they begin to wonder about the nature, value, and function of this particular object (Ferreiro, 1982, p.8).

The psychogenetic theory of Ferriero and Teberosky (1982) of Spanish-speaking children's evolution of knowledge about written language is very key in analyzing and documenting how children learn the alphabetic writing system. Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) delineate four possible conceptual interpretations that children may use. These levels are categorized into four writing systems:

presyllabic, syllabic, syllabic-alphabetic, and alphabetic. However, Ferreiro (1986) has now collapsed the evolutionary progression into three major periods. These levels, according to Flores (1990) are psychogenetically ordered. Children progress from presyllabic to syllabic, then from the syllabic interpretation to a syllabic-alphabetic. Finally, the children would progress to their alphabetic conceptual interpretation of Spanish which approximates the adult conventional writing. Research indicates that children do not progress in a linear fashion from one level to the next.

This knowledge gives teachers the tools to understand and teach writing using authentic communication

Primary Language and Writing

Language learning is natural and social. It is an ongoing process. Learning in general occurs in social contexts and is mediated by others in the same manner that language is learned (Edelsky, Altwerger, & Flores, 1991). Graves (1983) points out that writing is a social act. The use of a student's second language may delay writing in the second language because it is possible for students to write even if they lack perfect reading or speaking skills (Williams & Snipper, 1990).

Research points out that children learning a second language in school must gradually learn the words of the new language along with how to pronounce and sequence them so as to convey meaning to serve a variety of functional communication goals (Peregoy & Boyle, 1993). Therefore it seems to be more difficult to convey meaning in the second language for a Spanish-speaking student.

When a child is learning his first language it is for functional purposes, to make sense of the world. According to Edelsky, Altwenger and Flores (1991), babies learn language through actually using it, not through practicing its separate parts until some later date when they assemble the parts and finally use the entire thing. Moreover, babies do not wait to use language until they have mastered each subsystem (the phonology, semantics, syntax, etc.) Though their model of each subsystem may be quite unadultlike, babies use each one, especially the pragmatic system, to make meaning. Vygotsky (1986) supports this idea when he states that unlike the teaching of oral language, into which children grow into their own accord, the teaching of written language does not parallel this, it is based on artificial training. Even when babies babble, they are employing phonological and intonational features,

placing the babble in social events. In the same manner, when children begin to write, the scribbles and wavy lines refer to the conceptual development about writing that a child is trying to make sense.

At some point in their development of the spoken language, someone in the environment reciprocates by participating in conversations with the child. Even when babies are just observing rather than being addressed directly, they are observing language in use, language that is always embedded in a social context. According to Goodman (1986), language learning is a process of social and personal invention. Every person invents language all over again in trying to communicate with the world. These inventions involve the use of the surrounding public language, and they are constantly tested, modified, abandoned, or perfected. Parents and siblings do not really teach language. They help to shape its development by the way they respond. Errors are made along the way. As Goodman states, "Whole language programs accept the reality of learning through risk-taking and error (Goodman, 1986, p. 19)."

Vygotsky focuses on the social and cultural contexts and the use of language to solve problems. His description of the function of language in a

child's early years is the following:

The specifically human capacity for language enables children to provide for auxiliary tools in the solution of difficult tasks, to overcome impulsive action, to plan a solution to a problem prior to its execution, and to master their own behavior. Signs and words serve children, first and foremost, as a means of social contact with other people. The cognitive and communicative function of language then become the basis of a new and superior form of activity in children (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 28-29).

Therefore, language becomes a tool to assist the child when he/she begins to write. In a study by Edelsky, (1986) she consistently found that a child's first language facilitated the development of writing in the student's second language.

A major part of what is learned when babies learn language, is what language is for. According to Heath (1986), for all children, academic success depends less on the specific language they know, but on the ways of using language. Heath argues that all language learning is cultural learning. Children do not learn merely the building blocks of their mother tongue; the sound, words and order; they learn how to use language to get what they want, protect themselves, express their wonderings and worries, and ask questions about the world.

In order for children whose first language is not

English, to succeed in school they must have multiple, repeated, and reinforced access to certain language uses that match those of the school. According to Heath (1986) there are genres of language uses. Genres are maps or plans to stretches of discourse. Heath (1986) states that linguists, sociologists, psychologists, and anthropologists have provided data that support the following school patterns that ground school learning:

1. Label quests. These activities name items or ask for the names of items.
2. Meaning quests. In this activity adults either infer for the young child what he or she means, interpret their own behavior or that of others, or ask for explanations of what is meant or intended. In schools, teachers ask students to explain the meaning of words, pictures, combinations of events and their own behaviors.

The next four genres delineated by Heath (1986) are ones in which activities become integrated as the learner becomes fully skilled in a repertoire of genres:

3. Recounts. The speaker retells experiences or information known to both teller and listener.

4. Accounts. These provide information that is new to the listener or new interpretations of information that the listener already knew.
5. Eventcasts. In this genre, individuals provide a running narrative on events currently in the attention of the teller and listeners as in a sportcast or forecast events to be accomplished in the future, as in developing plans.
6. Stories. This is most familiar genre, because of our customary associations with the written stories.

These language activities and genres function as the primary language uses through which students demonstrate the academic, cognitive, and linguistic proficiency required by schools (Cummins, 1981). It is through these language uses that students in school display their knowledge.

Language in the Classroom

Krashen (1985) argues that subject matter instruction plays an important role in cognitive development. In order for children not to fall behind in subject matter, the first language must be used as a medium of instruction. Children who fall behind in subject matter because they do not understand the

language of instruction may also be missing the stimulation necessary for normal intellectual development. Knowledge of subject matter and cognitive/academic proficiency encourages second language acquisition. It does this by giving children the context or background needed to understand academic input. Krashen (1984) states that writing is acquired subconsciously much the same way that a second language is acquired, through "comprehensible input."

Children who are not behind in subject matter and who have normal cognitive development will simply understand more of what they hear, both in English language medium classes and in academic discussions outside of class. If children, understand more, they will acquire more of the second language (Krashen, 1981).

According to Krashen (1981), children who are behind in subject matter and weak in the second language face double trouble. Their failure to understand will not only cause them to fall further behind, but they will fail to make progress in second language acquisition. Knowledge of subject matter has an indirect, but very powerful effect on second language acquisition. It can be argued, according to Krashen (1981), that maintaining matter proficiency,

whether in the first or second language, leads to a better attitude toward school, in general, and higher self-esteem.

Cummins (1981) argues that in order to keep up in subject matter and maintain normal cognitive development, students need to develop high levels of first language competence. Specifically, they need to develop not only basic interpersonal and communicative skills in the first language (BICS), but also "cognitive competence," according to Cummins (1989) is the ability to use language effectively as an instrument of thought and to represent cognitive operations by means of language. A lack of development of this aspect of first language competence may explain problems some minority children have in school. When the first language is not used extensively and promoted at home, and is not supported at school, low first language skills, according to Cummins (1981) can exert a "limiting effect" on the development of the second language.

Many times it is assumed that because a student can converse in the second language, that student can function academically in English, if it is the second language. This is a misconception, Cummins (1981) makes the distinction between "surface fluency" and

conceptual-linguistic knowledge" which he formalized in terms of basic interpersonal communicative skills (BICS) which is language proficiency in everyday communication contexts. According to Cummins (1981) cognitive/academic language proficiency (CALP) is the ability to make complex meanings explicit in either the written or oral language.

Recent Studies

In a study by Edelsky (1986), the writing of second language learners in grades one through three was examined. She consistently found that the student's first language facilitated their development of writing in their second language by using authentic writing activities for the purpose of communication served to support the student's learning.

In another study (Flores, 1990), first grade bilingual children in a whole language classroom, use language (oral and written or first or second) for authentic communication within social contexts.

As research indicates the development of the primary language facilitates other language learning. Therefore, when children are coming to learn the written language the social context plays a crucial role in facilitating how children learn the alphabetic writing system (Flores, 1990).

A study was done by Edelsky and Jilbert (1985) to compare writing in Spanish with writing in English. The study focused on the following aspects of writing: spelling, code-switching, other non-spelling conventions, such as segmentation and punctuation, quality of content, and structural features such as beginnings, endings and organizational schemes. The study proposed to clarify some of the relationships between first and second language writing, the nature and effect of bilingualism and biliteracy. Observations from this study were that children's written errors were not random. As with oral language, they are not errors, but evidence of hypotheses children are making. Data from monolingual programs documented the centrality of context in writing. The data show writing occurs and develops through contexts. The children in this study seem to be acquiring two separate systems without confusion.

Goodman (1986) states that bilingual children learn more than one language for the same reason that monolingual children learn only one. Language becomes the medium of thought and learning. He also stated that to be successful, school second language programs must incorporate authentic functional language opportunities. Hudelson (1989) also supports that

second language writing develops within the framework of authentic communication.

Interactive dialogue journal writing offers both students and teachers a means of engaging in authentic written communication whether students use the primary or second language.

According to Fulwiler (1987), interactive journals provide children with an arena of communicating in order to facilitate the development of written discourse. Journals also serve as an avenue for experimenting with written language within the framework of a socially mediated interactive activity for student writing in their second language (Edelsky, 1986).

Whereby literacy is of major importance in schools. It is important to examine instructional practices in order to facilitate literacy development for all students.

Dialogue Journals as a Teaching Tool

"It is necessary to bring the child to an inner understanding of writing, and to arrange that writing will be organized development rather than learning" (Vygotsky, 1978, p. 118). The use of dialogue journals provide authentic use of written communication.

...dialogue journal writing is one powerful means of bridging the gap between the oral

language competence that students already possess and the competence necessary for writing extended prose unassisted, and thus an effective way to prepare children or adults for literacy (Peyton, 1988, p. 91).

Staton and Shuy (1988) state that dialogue journals constitute a purposeful use of writing in the school environment, one which has meaning and benefits for both students and teachers. They also serve as a bridge between natural spoken conversation, at which students are already competent, and the student's developing competence in writing. Staton (1988) defined dialogue journal writing as:

...the use of a journal for the purpose of carrying out a written communication between two persons, in this case a student and the teacher, on a regular continuous basis. The frequency of writing, the external form (a bound notebook, and even the participants may all vary in different settings. The essential attributes of dialogue journal writing are these: a dialogue or conversation in writing carried on over an extended length of time, with each partner having equal and frequent daily, semiweekly, weekly) turns. In addition to its interactive continuous nature, each writer is free to initiate a conversation on any topic of personal and mutual interest, with the expectation that the other participant will generally acknowledge the topic and often comment on it. (p. 4)

Flores (1990) described daily interactive dialogue journals as an authentic use of written language within social contexts. Dialogue journals are used for personal communication. Every day each child must choose a topic and write an entry in the dialogue

journal. The student can share feelings, opinions, likes and dislikes, dreams, goals, etc. The students may also draw an illustration. As the student is finished, he/she reads the entry to the teacher even if the teacher is not able to read the student's symbolic representative of meaning. Once the child has mediated his/her meaning of the written test using both illustration and oral language, the teacher responds both orally and in written form mediating meaning. At the same time the teacher is demonstrating knowledge about the alphabetic writing system. At the same time the teacher is creating a "zone of proximal development."

Children's approaches to problem solving are socially mediated through formal and informal interactions with members of the culture group within the "zone of proximal development." Vygotsky (1978) defined it as:

...the distance between the actual development level as determined by independent problem solving and the level of potential development as determined through problem solving under guidance or in collaboration with more capable peers. (p. 86)

Children internalize the kind of help they receive from others and use what they have learned to direct their own problem-solving behavior. Thus, the ideal classroom social environment will create opportunities

for the students to engage in collaborative activities that integrate their interest and experiences with their thinking, listening, speaking, reading and writing skills.

Ferreiro and Teberosky (1982) studied the writing development of four- to six-year old Spanish-speaking children and described their progression of invented spellings. They found that the children they studied had developed a syllabic hypothesis, that every syllable should be encoded with one letter.

The first, second and third grades studied by Edelsky (1986) used phonetic features, one letter for one sound, and phonic generalizations followed. These were used by children who were more literate. Also, Edelsky (1986) studied the writing of bilingual children writing in Spanish and English. She analyzed the parts of many strategies including spelling, segmentation, punctuation, code-switching and audience.

Using Dialogue Journals as an Assessment Tool

In Edelsky's (1986) study of children's writing in a bilingual program, she concludes that most "errors" in writing are sensible. Children are trying to make sense of the written language.

The use of dialogue journals, according to Newman (1984) is full of learning potential for both students

and teachers. Children have the opportunity of writing every day and receiving almost immediate feedback on the meaning of what they have written. Teachers have the opportunity of observing children in the process of developing as readers and writers.

CHAPTER 3

DESIGN AND METHODOLOGY

This project is descriptive in nature. A descriptive method, according to Anderson (1990), is an approach that attempts to describe data. A descriptive study generally focuses on the present state of any given activity and attempts to answer the question: "What exists?" Observations and the collection of data are open-ended. Description is important because we often do not know the state of the thing being described. Descriptive studies identify facts and describe how things are at present. They may also compare and contrast likenesses and differences, classify and correlate data in order to describe relationships, or may suggest predictions as to the natural course a phenomenon may follow (Johns, 1985).

Case study analysis, consisting of data collected, observation and documentary analysis was used to examine the four students in the study.

Data Needed

There are two parts to the data collection. The first part consisted of collecting authentic writing samples in the form of dialogue journal entries from the students during a nine month period in order to examine

the developmental scripting patterns and the evolution of such patterns.

The second part consisted of observations of the students in the study. Students were observed during interactive dialogue journal writing sessions. The teacher observed and made notations of student's perceptions of writing. These observations served to confirm that which was found in the journal entry writing samples.

For this project, journals were chosen based on four criteria:

1. The journals were written by children who demonstrated Spanish language proficiency based on the school's language test given at the beginning of the school year (Bilingual Syntax Measure, Burt, Dulay & Hernandez-Chavez, 1975). The BSM may not be considered a thorough oral language assessment. It was used to assess Spanish and English proficiency for all children entering school.
2. There were sufficient entries in the journal to form a basis for analysis.
3. A wide range of developmental abilities were represented.
4. The journals were representative of the other

journals in the classroom.

These dialogue journals provided the opportunity to observe and analyze nonsimulated, functional writing in a classroom setting over an entire school year.

Data Collection

Written data for this project was obtained from the students' interactive dialogue journals from September 1992 through May 1993. The students wrote in their journals on a daily basis. Journal writing occurred within the first hour of the school day. Samples were collected for each student on a weekly basis. One monthly sample was selected and analyzed to examine the evolution of writing patterns. Also noted was the use of the students' primary or secondary language. A total of nine writing samples for each student were analyzed.

Subjects

The focus of this project was to examine the writing development of four Spanish-speaking kindergarten students in the social context of interactive dialogue journals. Second, the role of the primary language during this evolution of knowledge of the written language.

The four students included in the study attend an

elementary school in the Coachella Valley. The school is a K-6 grade level with approximately 753 student population. The ethnic breakdown in percentages is as follows: Hispanics 97%, American Indian 1%, Black 1%, and Anglo 1% with approximately 7% of the students being classified as migrant. Almost 90% of the students participate in government subsidized breakfast and lunch programs. At the beginning of the school year, September 1992, a whole language pedagogy was implemented at the school.

The four students participating in this project were in a bilingual kindergarten class. The class was self-contained and the teachers have a whole language philosophy of education. Goodman (1986) states that in a whole language classroom oral and written language must be functional, fulfilling a particular purpose for the language user.

Methodology

In order to analyze the journal entries Perego and Boyle (1990) have identified seven developmental scripting strategies which they have sequenced along a continuum from least advanced to most advanced: scribble writing, pseudo-letters, letters, pseudo-words, copied words, self-generated words and self-generated sentences (see Figure 1).

Also, used to analyze the writing samples were the Evaluation of Literacy Development Interactive Journal Writing for Grades K-1 (Flores, Garcia, Gonzales, Hidalgo, Kaczmarek, and Romero, 1986)(see Figure 2). The main objects of data analysis were the students' journal entries. Monthly journal entries were collected for each student.

Figure 1.

A Continuum of Developmental Scripting Strategies



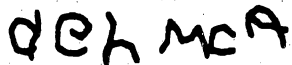
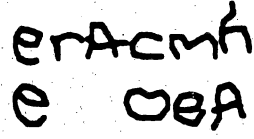
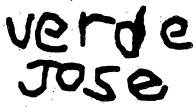
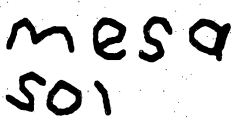
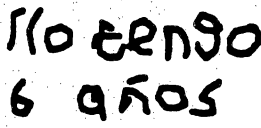
WRITING TYPE	DEFINITION	EXAMPLE
scribble writing	sequences of wavy lines or repetitive forms that bear little or no resemblance to actual letters, yet give the general impression of writing	
pseudo-letters	written forms that look like letters, but are not	
letters	recognizable letters from the (Spanish) alphabet	
pseudo-words	strings of letters or pseudo-letters that are spaced in such a way as to look like words, but are not actually words	
copied words	words that have been copied from displays in classroom	
self-generated words	independently created words that are spelled conventionally enough to be recognized	
self-generated sentences	fully formed, conventional or nearly conventional sentences which communicate an idea	

Figure 2.

Evaluation of Literacy Development
Interactive Journal Writing Grades K-1

Name _____ Teacher _____

WRITING - QUALITY

	Date			Date			Date			Date			Date		
	C	D	NE	C	D	NE	C	D	NE	C	D	NE	C	D	NE
1. Writing Systems															
2. Understands Purpose															
3. Story - Ill. Match															
4. Self Selects Topic															
5. Willing to Take Risks															
6. L1 & L2 Language Use															

WRITING - MECHANICS

	Date			Date			Date			Date			Date		
	C	D	NE	C	D	NE	C	D	NE	C	D	NE	C	D	NE
1. Use of Space/Line															
2. Spacing of Words															
3. Control of Writing Instrument															
4. Left to Right Directionality															
5. Letter Formation															
6. Punctuation															
7. Spelling															
Invented _____															
Conventional _____															

Comments: _____

Code: D - Developing
C - Controls
NE - No Evidence

• Writing Systems Ferreira, et al
PS (Pre-syllabic)
S (Syllabic)
SA (Syllabic-Alphabetic)
A (Alphabetic)

CHAPTER 4

ANALYSIS AND RESULTS

A case study approach was used to understand how interactive journal in a whole language classroom, provided an effective teaching tool for writing in a kindergarten classroom. The data from journal entries was analyzed and discussed in order to reach an answer to the research questions:

1. Will the use of interactive journals increase the quantity and quality among Spanish-speaking kindergarten students?
2. What role does the primary language play during interactive journals?

In order to analyze the data that was gathered, it was necessary to organize the data of the four students in the following manner:

1. Jonathan - Student A.
2. Gabriela - Student B.
3. Linda - Student C.
4. Renee - Student D.

Case Studies

Student A. Jonathan had a chronological age of 5.9 at the beginning of the data collection and 6.5 at the conclusion of the study. Jonathan scored a 2 on the BSM English and a 3 on the BSM Spanish. His

family spoke Spanish at home, but he had older siblings who spoke English. He had attended Headstart before entering kindergarten. When he entered kindergarten Jonathan could write his name and knew some letters in the alphabet.

In Figure 3, Jonathan organized his writing left to right using recognizable letters from the alphabet to represent meaning. He did not use scribble writing or psuedo-letters but wrote random letters. According to Ferreiro (1986) Jonathan was engaged in the presyllabic writing system. This is the first period of development. Children begin to make the distinction between drawing and writing. Jonathan remained in the first period for the first three months of school as was evident in his journal entries.

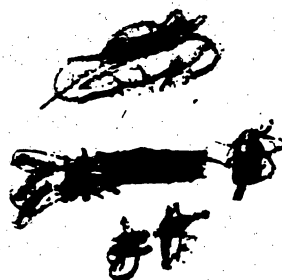
In Figure 4, Jonathan was still using letters but was also experimenting with punctuation.

In Figure 5, his repertoire of letters has increased significantly.

By December, as evident in Figure 6, he was using a syllabic/alphabetic representation: "MI PAPABPONE LA LUSE DE NBAR." (My father is going to put up the Christmas lights). Jonathan was also experimenting with uppercase/lowercase letters and word spacing.

By January, see Figure 7, Jonathan's journal

Figure 3. Student A - September Journal Entry



SEP 9 1954

HUNAKIUS NC-HF-BIT;

Kul. t... .. long... .. tort...

Figure 4. Student A - October Journal Entry

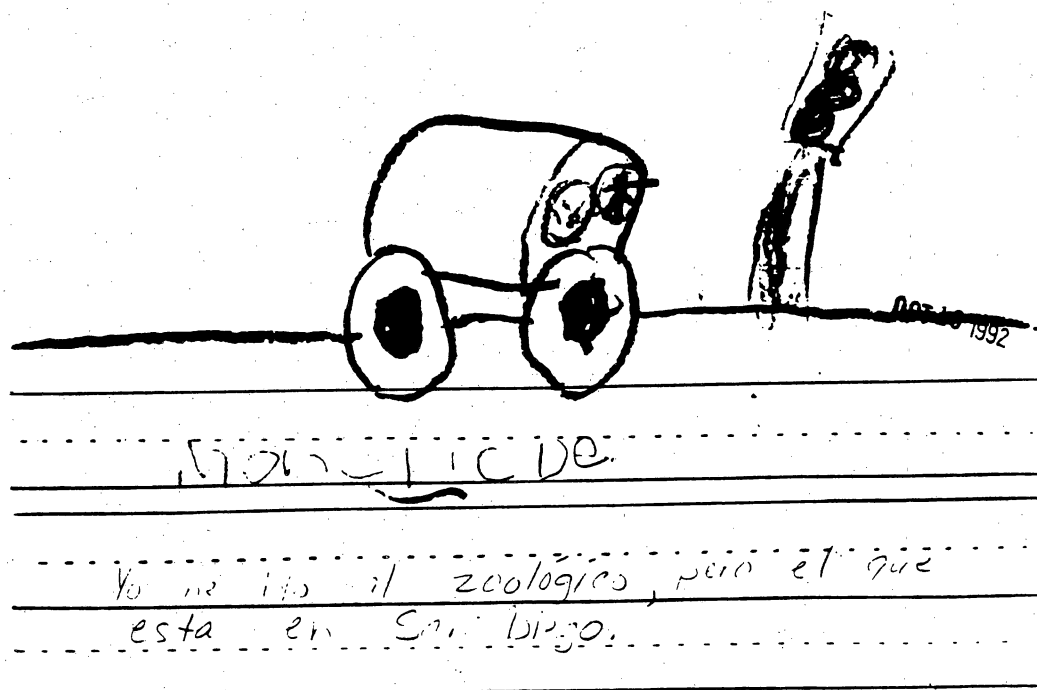


Figure 5. Student A - November Journal Entry

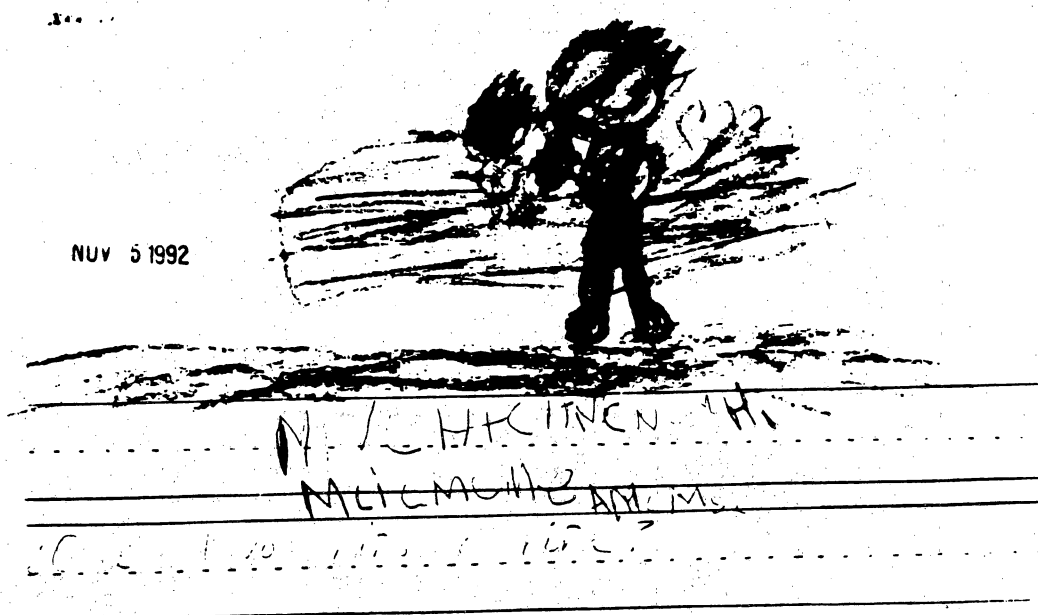


Figure 6. Student A - December Journal Entry

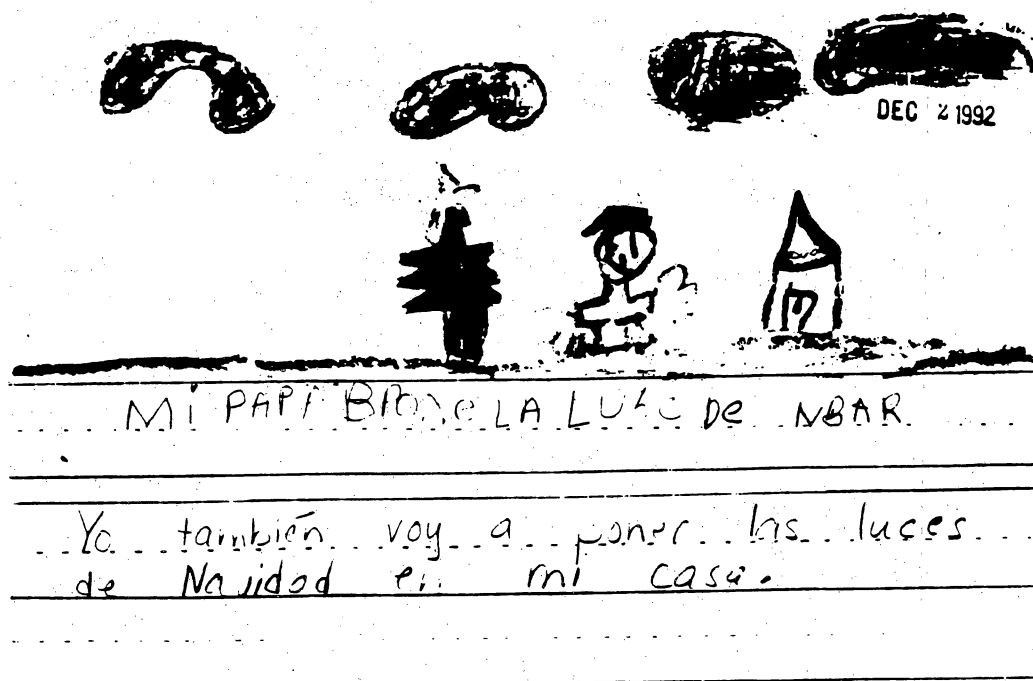
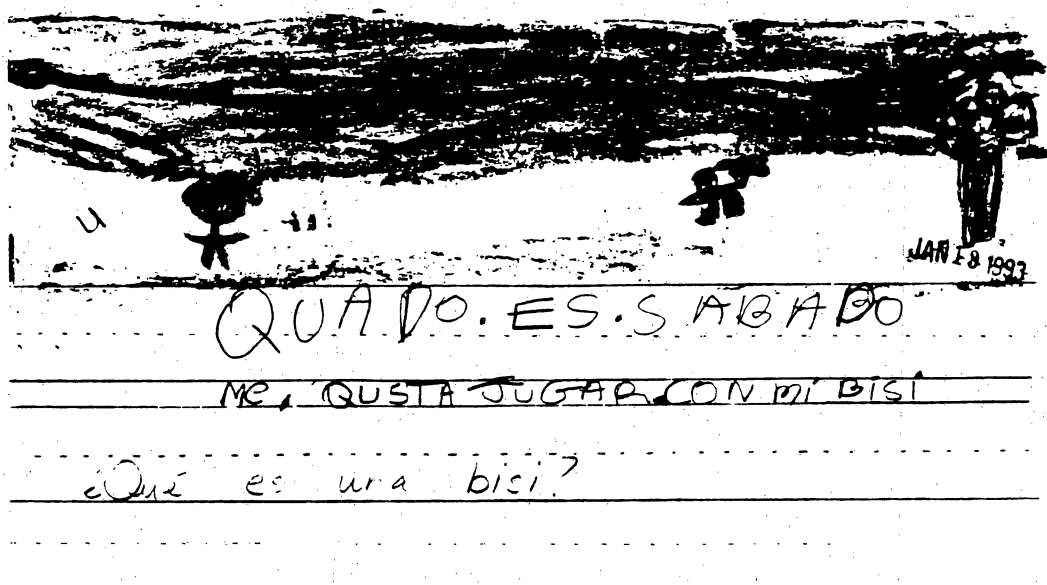


Figure 7. Student A - January Journal Entry



sample was more alphabetic than syllabic, but he was still using both. He was independently using both. He was independently creating sentences that are spelled conventionally enough to be recognized. "OUADO ES SABADO ME QUSTA JUGAR CON MI BISI"-- (On Saturday I like to play with my bicycle).

Jonathan was completely alphabetic by February (Figure 8) and the rest of the school year. His challenge from this point was to learn the standard orthography. Another challenge for Jonathan was learning the English language. As was evident in Figure 9 and 10, he was using his knowledge of the written language in his primary language to spell English words. In Figure 9, he wrote "A mi me gusto Livbin Desr." (I liked the Living Desert). In Figure 10, he writes "Yo Fui Al Sine / Bi Una Peliquila Que se Yamaba Foebr Toauac." (I went to see the movie "Forever Young"). In the last Figure 11, Jonathan wrote self-generated sentences that are fully formed, conventional which communicate an idea.

Summary of progression. Jonathan had progressed from using letters at the presyllabic level in September, 1992, to using self-generated sentences at the alphabetic level by May, 1993. (See Table 1) Jonathan also was using interactive journals to learn English as

Figure 7. Student A - February Journal Entry

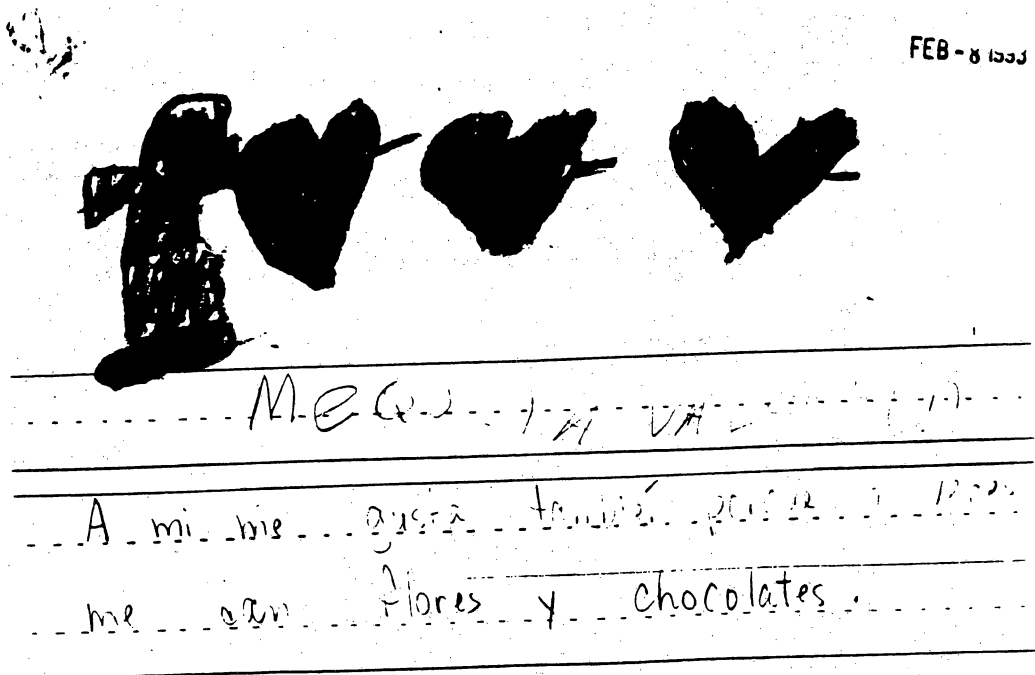


Figure 9. Student A - March Journal Entry

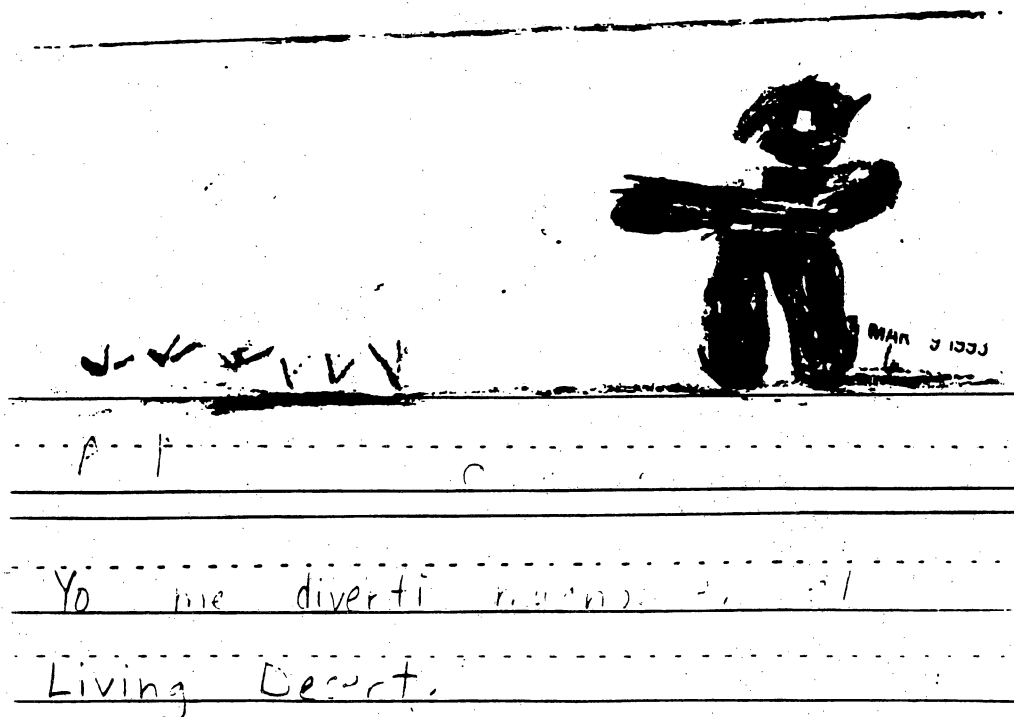


Figure 10. Student A - April Journal Entry


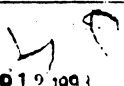
H H A A L L N 
 PO FU A L S I V E I L L I I I
 P E A L L E T E X S E A I I A
 F O E B R I T O A L I I U
 Yo tenas ganas de ir al cine pero
 no tengo tiempo. **JOE 9TH** 
 APR 12 1991

Figure 11. Student A - May Journal Entry

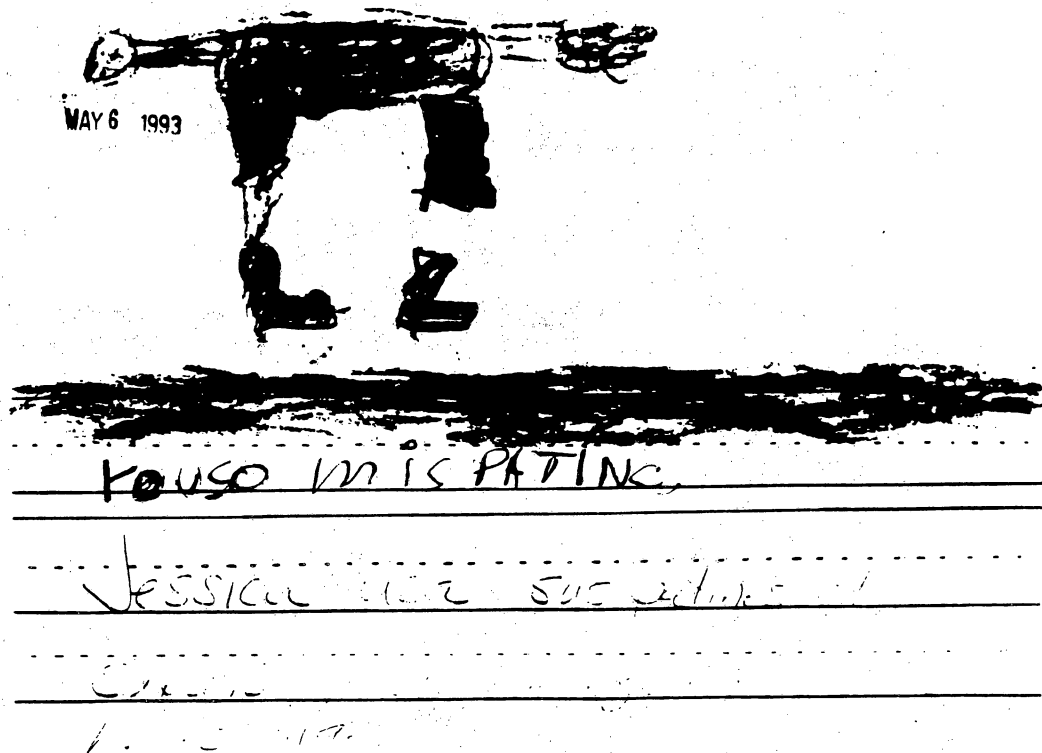
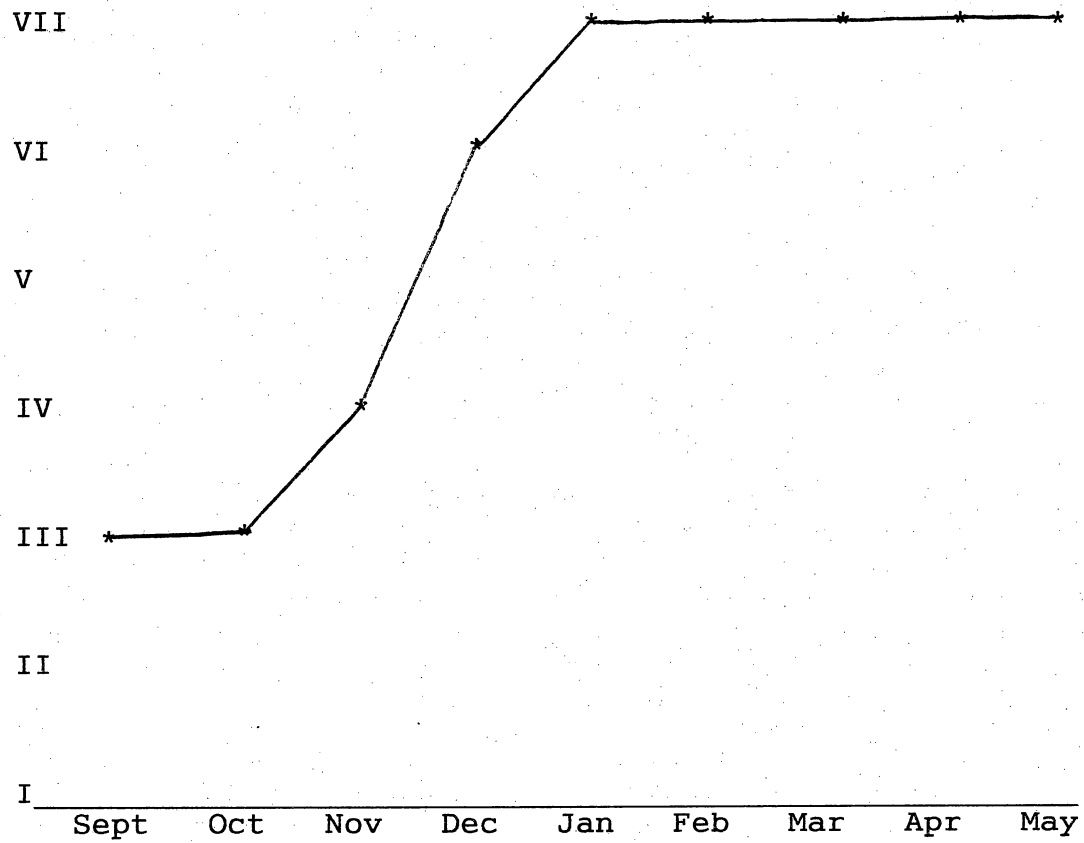


Table 1

Developmental Strategies Exhibited in Journal
Entries - Student A



his second language when he wrote names of stores and places he had been to or just words in the English language.

Student B. Gabriela also had a chronological age of 5.9 at the beginning of the data collection and 6.5 at the conclusion of the data collection. Gabriela scored a 1 on the BSM in English and a score of 4 on the BSM in Spanish. She was the oldest of two children and her family spoke only Spanish at home. Gabriela had not attended Headstart before entering kindergarten. Gabriela could write her name and knew very few letters of the Spanish alphabet.

In Figure 12, Gabriela did not attempt to write anything other than her name. She stated that she did not know how to write. She was not willing to take the risk of writing. She felt she must know how to write before she wrote anything. The teacher explained that she could write in whatever manner or symbols to communicate what she had illustrated in her journal. She had the ability to distinguish between drawing and writing.

In Figure 13. Gabriela was using letters from the alphabet to represent meaning. Her journal entry showed that she has developed print awareness and was developing uppercase and lowercase letter formation.

Figure 12. Student B - September Journal Entry

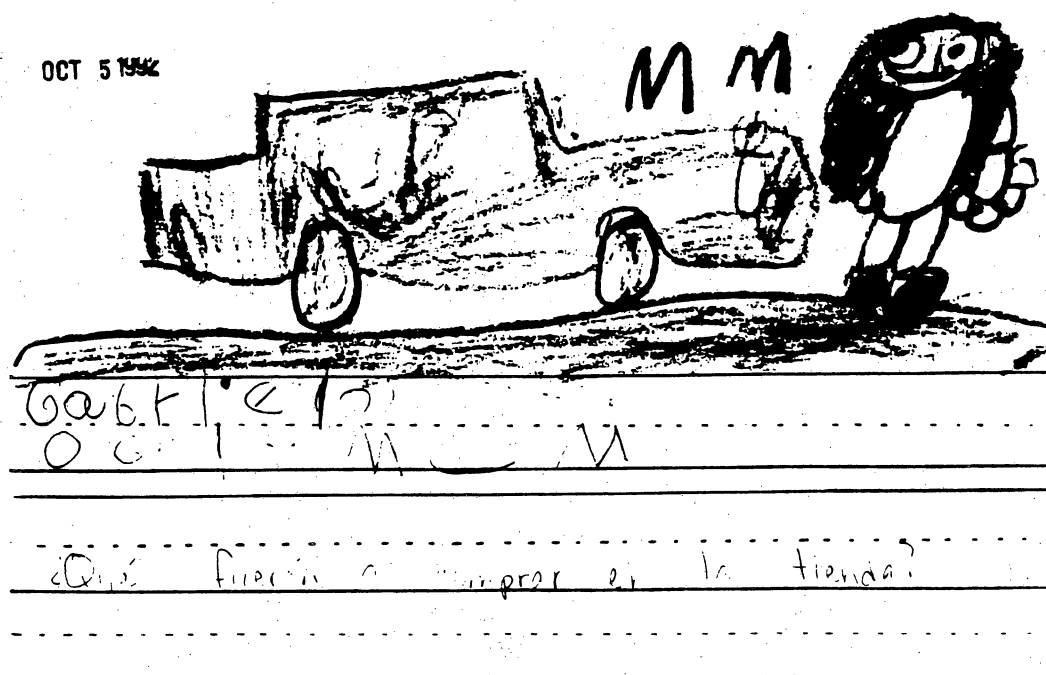


SEP 10 1996

Gabriel 10

1 Extra unit!

Figure 13. Student B - October Journal Entry



Her story matched the illustration.

By November Gabriela was still at the first level using letters, but she also used the letters in her brother's nickname Roki. She wrote in Figure 14, "O a R I G K N S A" (Mi mama nos compro una bomba a mi y a Roki). (My mother bought Roki and I a balloon). In Figure 15, she was still writing her first and last name. Gabriela would self-select the topics. She was in the presyllabic writing system. There was more detail in her drawings. The topics related to meaningful experiences.

By January (Figure 16) she does not write her name on each of the journal entries, however, she was still using letters. Gabriela represented her "written string" of letters with more vowels than consonants. According to Ferriero (1982) this is more common for Spanish-speaking students.

In the following entry Figure 17, Gabriela continued to be at the first level but her evolution of knowledge about the written language was beginning to use syllabic representation as was evident in the letters AKA at the end of the string of letters. The letters represented the word "alberca" (swimming pool).

By March, (Figure 18), Gabriela had progressed to the syllabic/alphabetic: Yo Es A VA EFMA "Yo estaba

Figure 14. Student B - November Journal Entry

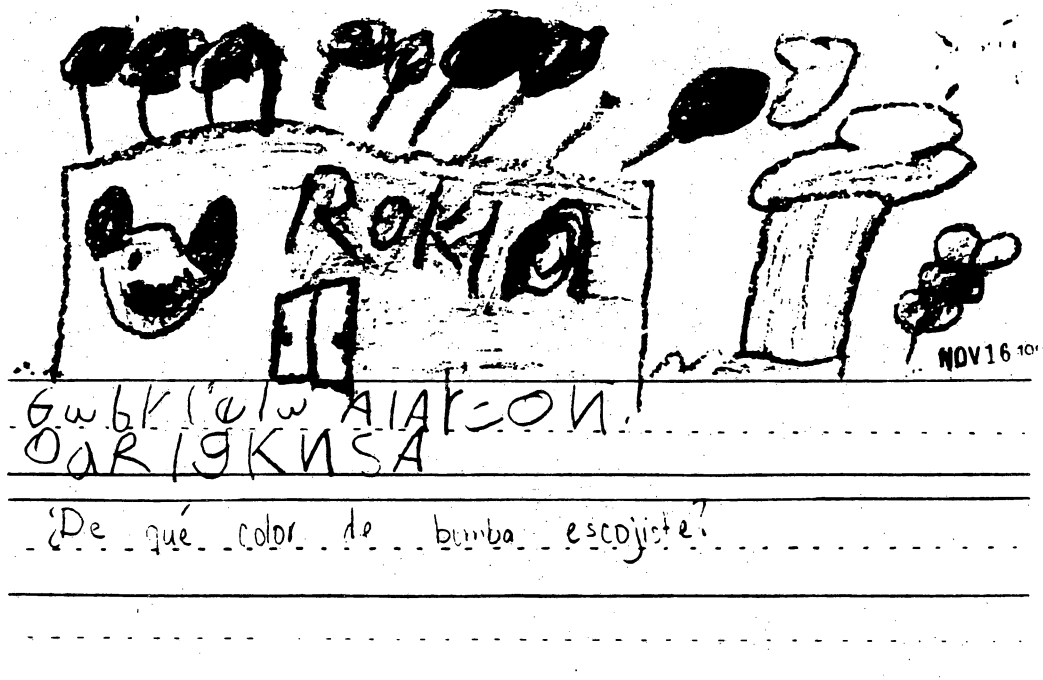


Figure 15. Student B - December Journal Entry

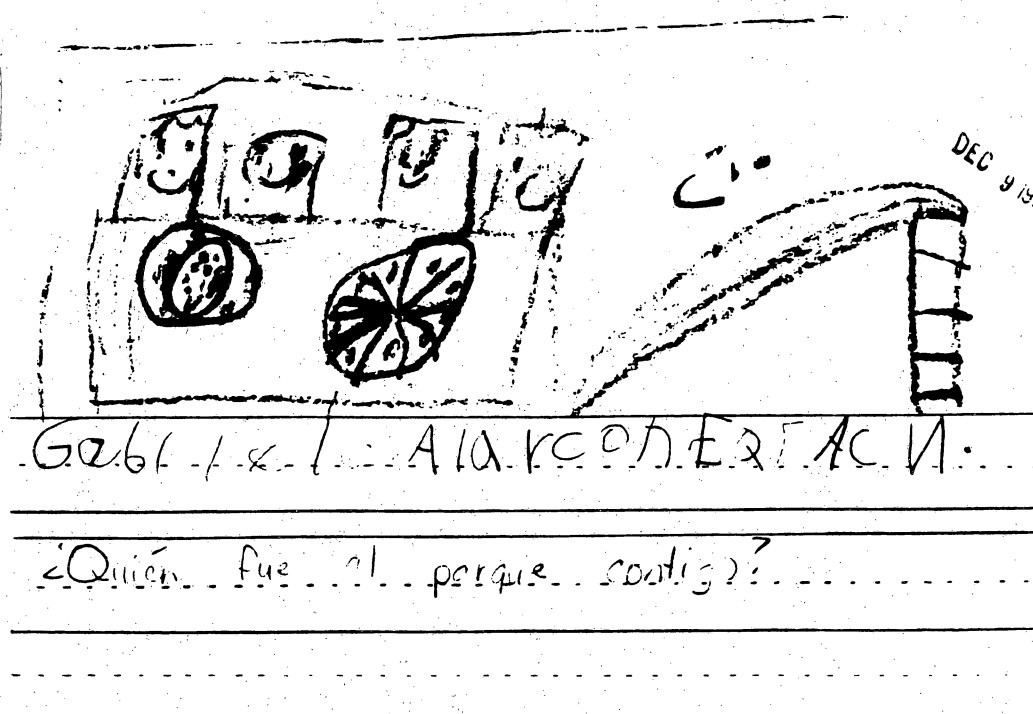


Figure 16. Student B - January Journal Entry

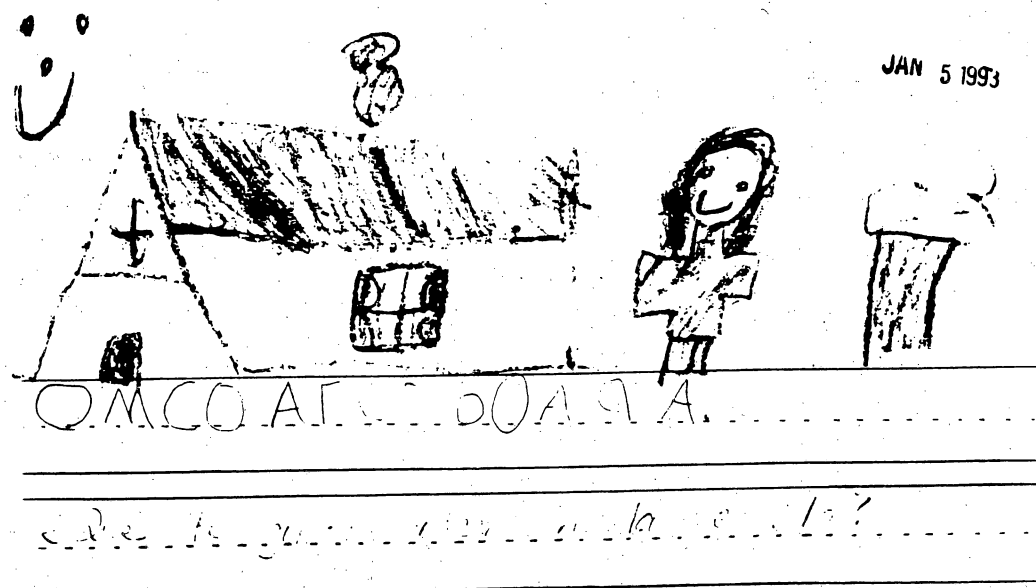


Figure 17. Student B - February Journal Entry



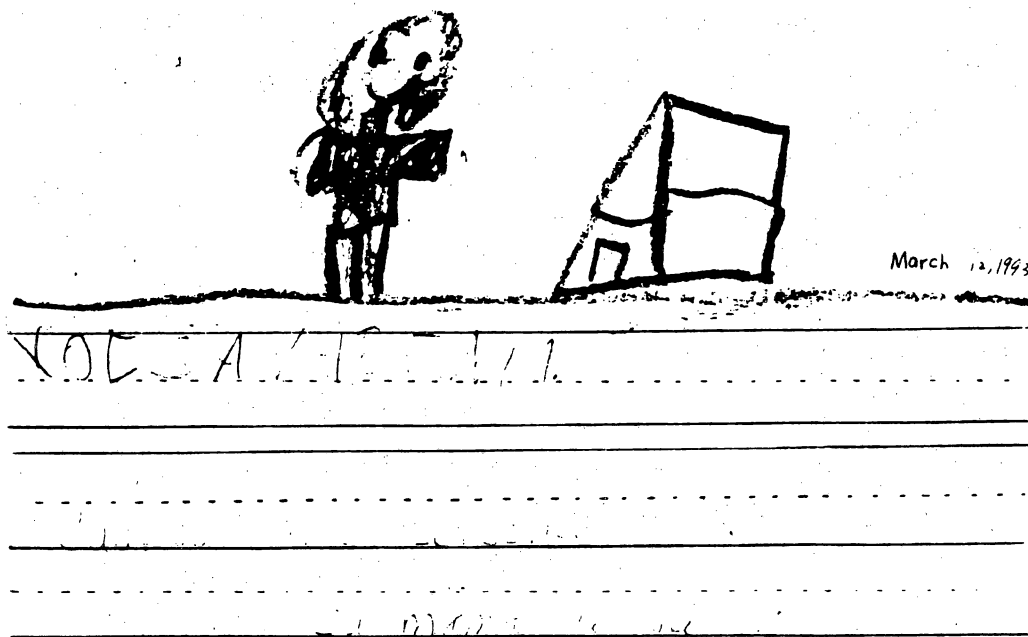
FEB-9 1993

OLMTCAC 1st A.

Hay & I had some fun for

the first time.

Figure 18. Student B - March Journal Entry



enferma." (I was sick). There was evidence of sound/letter correspondence.

In April and May her control of the standard orthography in Spanish was evident. Her segmentation (standard spacing between words) was not yet conventional, but Gabriela was writing self-generated sentences. These sentences are nearly conventional that communicate meaning (Figure 19 and Figure 20).

Summary of progression. Gabriela initially felt that she was unable to write, but using interactive journals she progressed from using "string of letters" to represent meaning and by the seventh month her conceptual interpretation had evolved from presyllabic writing system using letters to a syllabic/alphabetic writing system of nearly conventional sentences which communicate an idea. (See Table 2)

Student C. Linda entered kindergarten and had a chronological age of 5.4 at the beginning of the data collection and was 6.1 at the end of the data collection. Linda's score on the BSM in English was 4 and she scored a 5 on the BSM Spanish. Linda spoke Spanish at home but had older siblings that spoke English. Linda had not attended school prior to entering kindergarten. When she entered school Linda was able to write her name but did not know any letters

Figure 19. Student B - April Journal Entry

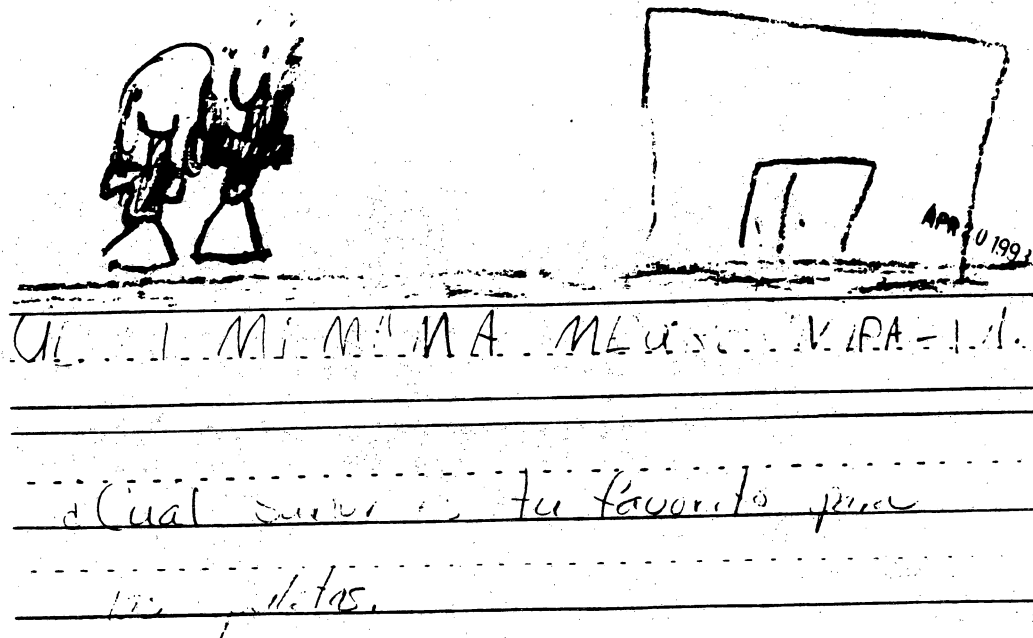
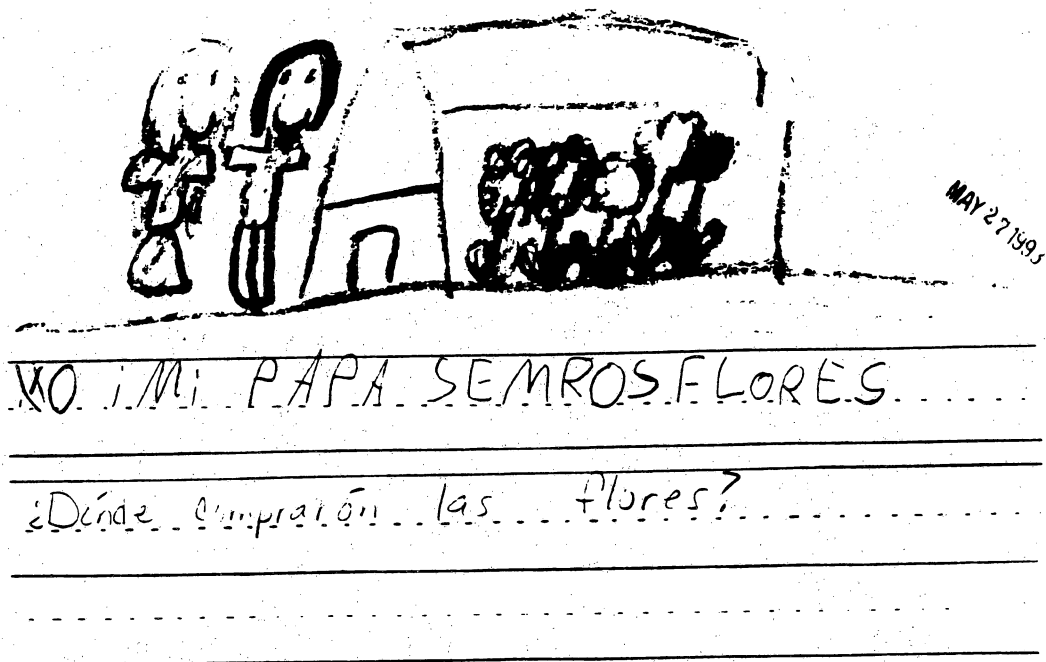


Figure 20. Student B - May Journal Entry

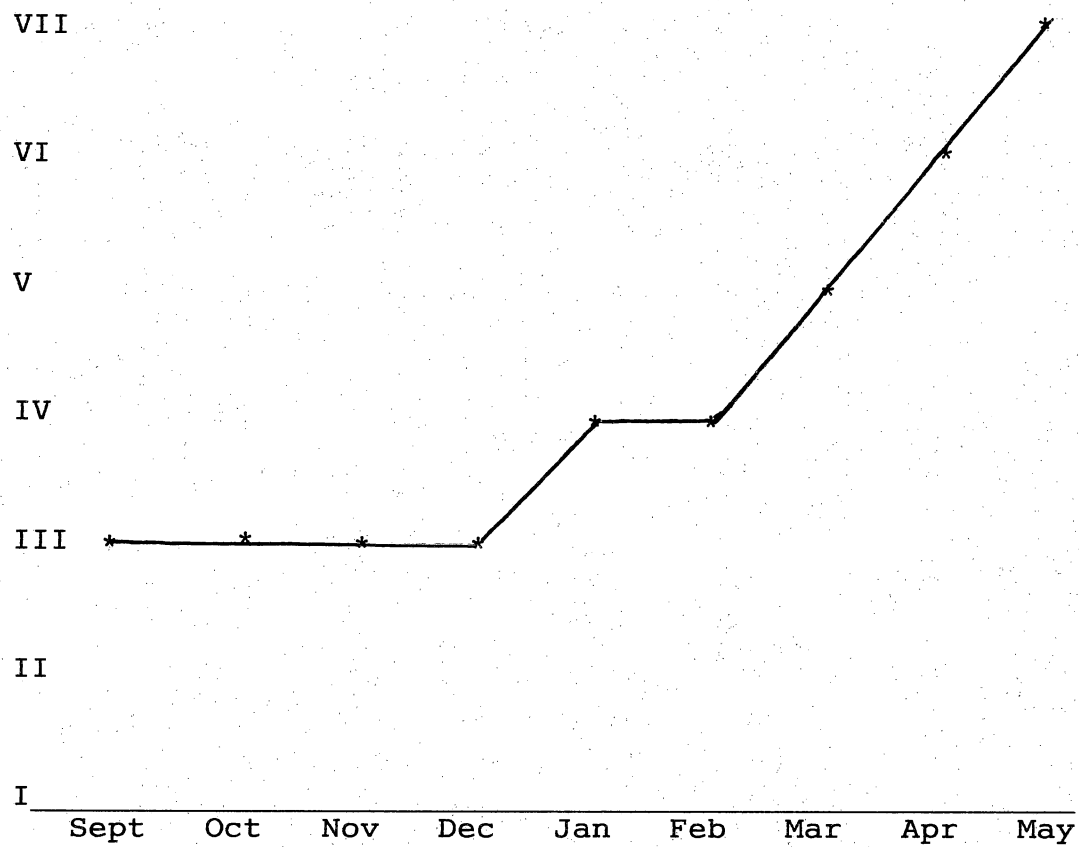


NO ¡MI PAPA SEMROS FLORES.

¿Dónde compraron las flores?

Table 2

Developmental Strategies Exhibited in Journal
Entries - Student B



in the alphabet.

In Figure 21, Linda used scribble writing and some of the letters in her name. She used left to right directionality. Linda began using Spanish her primary language, but towards the second week of journal writing she began responding in English, her second language. This was evident in Figure 22. She was at the first period using the presyllabic conceptual interpretation.

By November Linda was still responding in English to the written text. In Figure 23, Linda was using pseudo-letters. These are written forms that resemble letters.

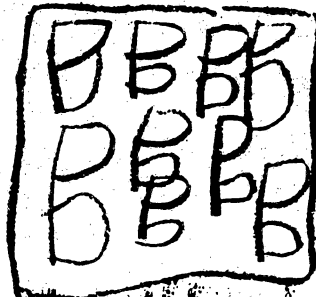
In the following journal entry (Figure 24) Linda was again scribble writing at the first period of the conceptual interpretation of writing. According to Ferriero and Gomez (1982) children do not necessarily progress in any type of order.

By January (Figure 25) Linda has started responding in Spanish again. She was told that it was all right to use Spanish when she wrote her journal entries. Here she has "strings of letters", using letters in the alphabet.

Linda continued to be engaged in the presyllabic writing system. She was able to make the distinction

Figure 21. Student C - September Journal Entry

SEP 11 1992



SEP 11 1992

SEP 11 1992

Figure 22. Student C - October Journal Entry

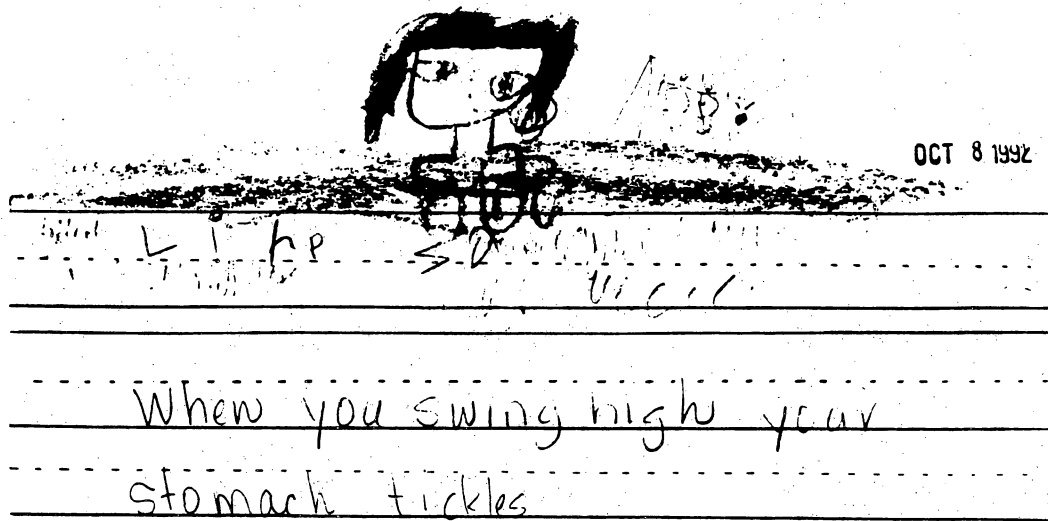


Figure 23. Student C - November Journal Entry

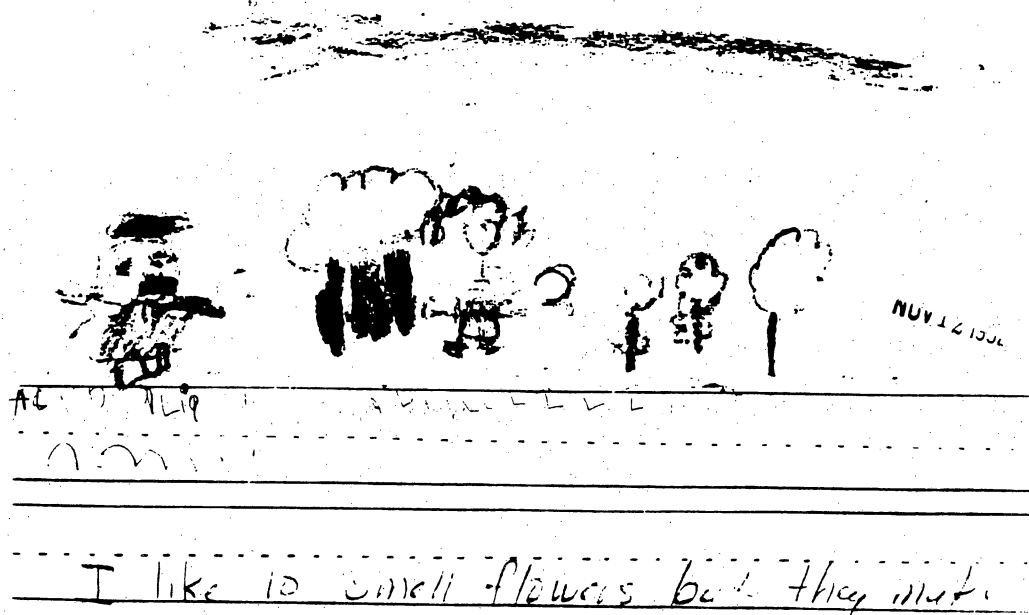


Figure 24. Student C - December Journal Entry

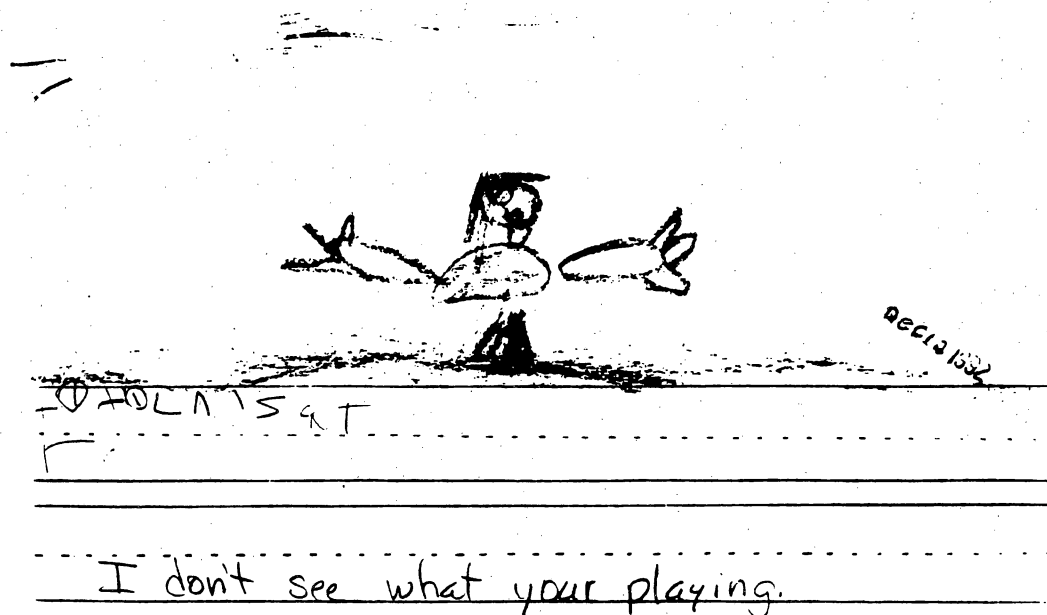
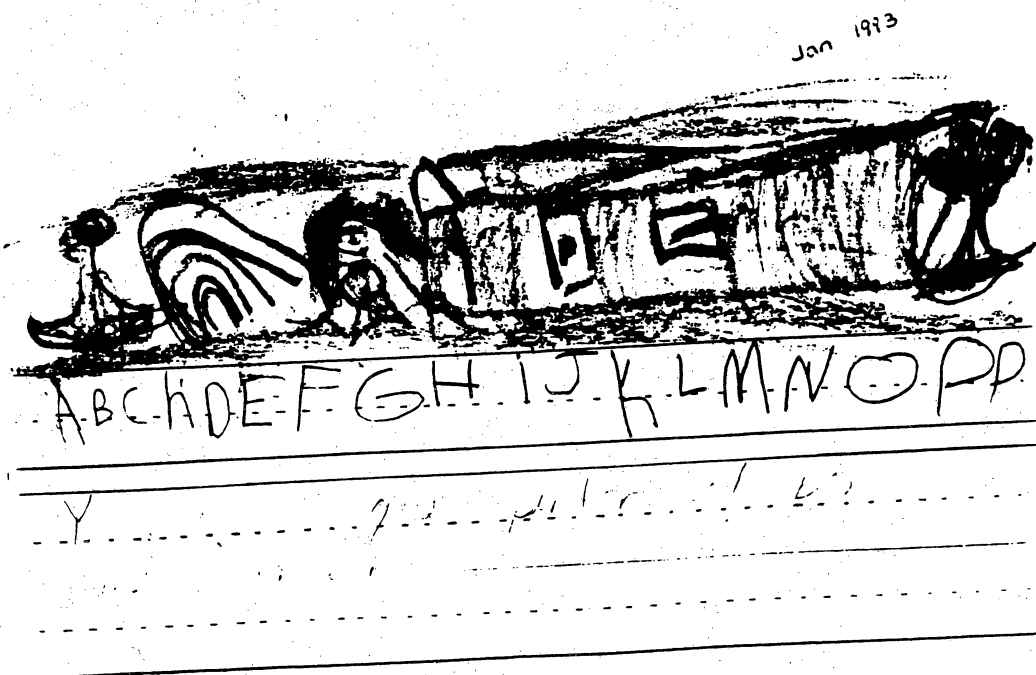


Figure 25. Student C - January Journal Entry



between drawing and writing. She would self-select her own topics and was willing to take risks using Spanish, her primary language (Figure 26).

By March Linda was moving towards the second period. Her repertoire of letters has increased significantly and there was evidence of some letter/sound correspondence. Figure 27 showed this progression.

In April and May Linda has figured out the alphabetic written system and was almost totally alphabetic. Figure 28 showed that she has written "La Nina tiene columpios atas D su casa." (The girl has swings in her backyard). In Figure 29 she wrote "La Nina se estava Moggan dose." (The girl is getting wet). The illustrations matched the text. She was also spacing between words. The illustrations were very detailed.

Summary of progression. In the beginning Linda was at the first period of the conceptual interpretation of the written language. She began using scribble writing then moved to pseudo-letters and letters. When she attempted to use English her second language in communicating the meaning of her drawings she began using scribble writing again. Once she was encouraged to use her first language, she passed the second period

Figure 26. Student C - February Journal Entry

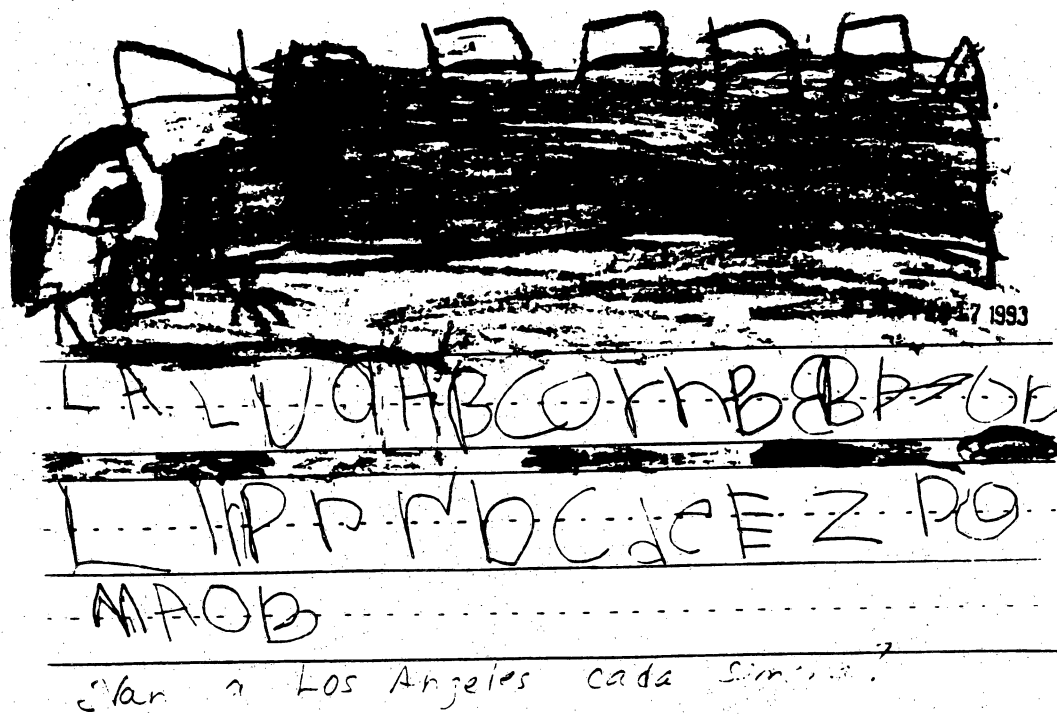


Figure 27. Student C - March Journal Entry

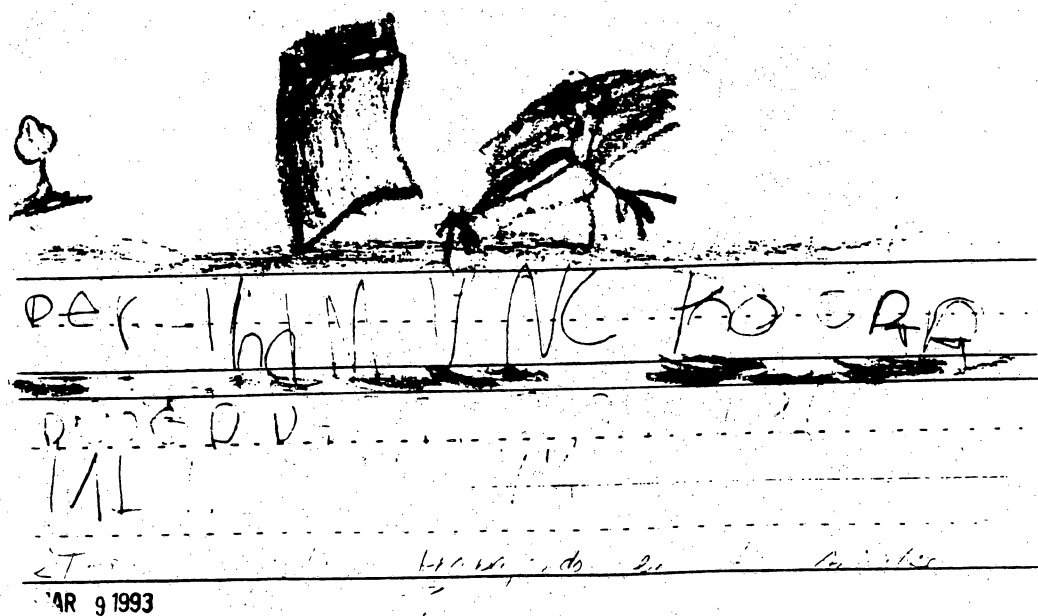
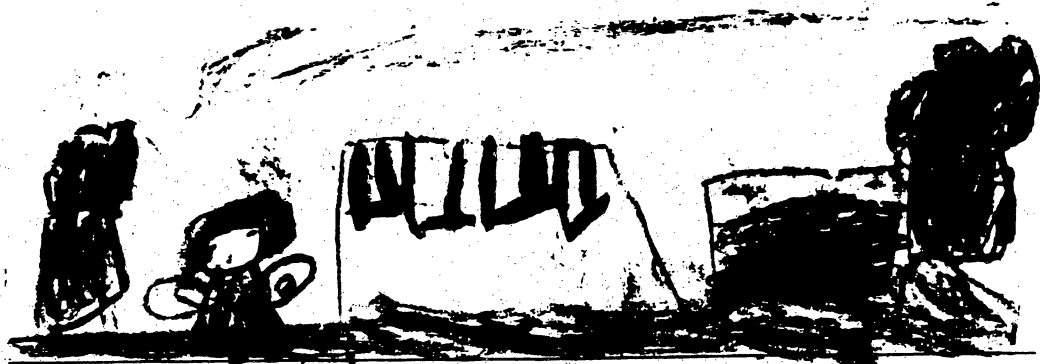


Figure 28. Student C - April Journal Entry



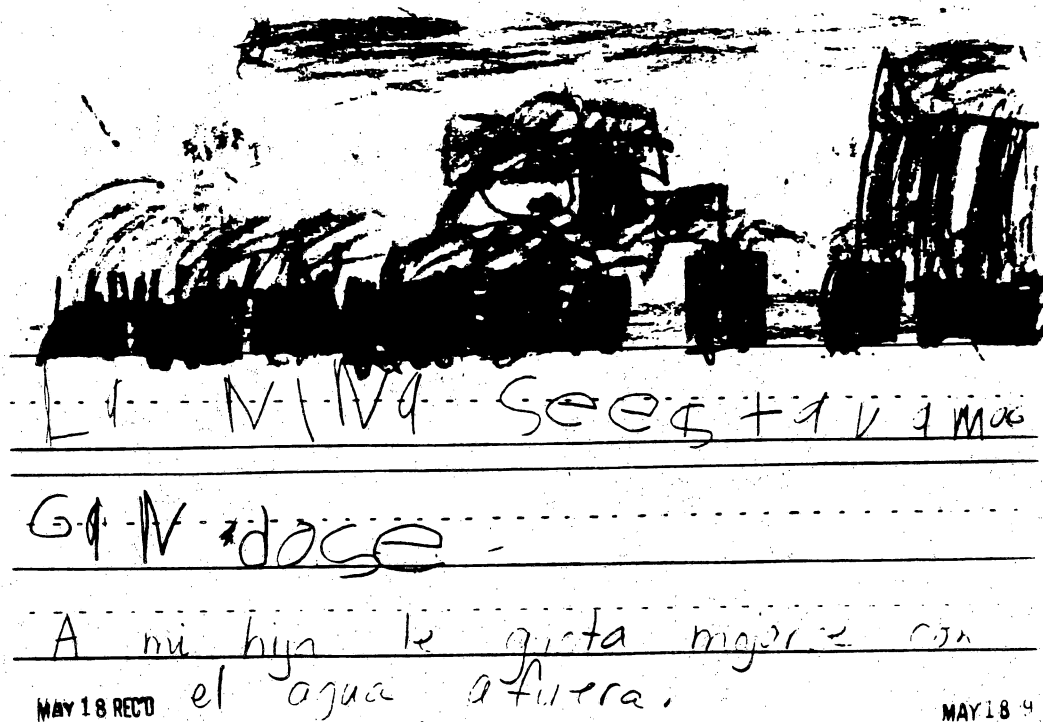
La niña tiene cumpleaños.

A-tas - Deyucasu

APR 28 1993

Yo se que esa niña esta muy
contenta con sus cumpleaños.

Figure 29. Student C - May Journal Entry



within a month. By April her refinement of the alphabetic writing system was quite evident. She remained in the third period until the end of kindergarten. (See Table 3)

Student D. Renee had never been in school prior to starting kindergarten. Renee had a chronological age of 5.7 at the onset of the data collection and 6.8 at the end of the data collection. The language spoken at home was English and Spanish. Her parents felt that English would be more beneficial for Renee. The class was a bilingual whole language kindergarten. Therefore, both English and Spanish were used for instruction.

In her first journal entry, Figure 30, Renee was at the first period. She used left to right directionality. She understood the purpose of the dialogue interactive journal as a means of communicating. Her illustration matched the story writing. When she was asked to write about her drawing she stated that she did not know how to write, only her name, but, she was willing to take the risk to write about what she had illustrated.

Renee was still using recognizable letters from the alphabet in Figure 31 but she was also spacing between the groups of letters.

Table 3

Developmental Strategies Exhibited in Journal Entries - Student C

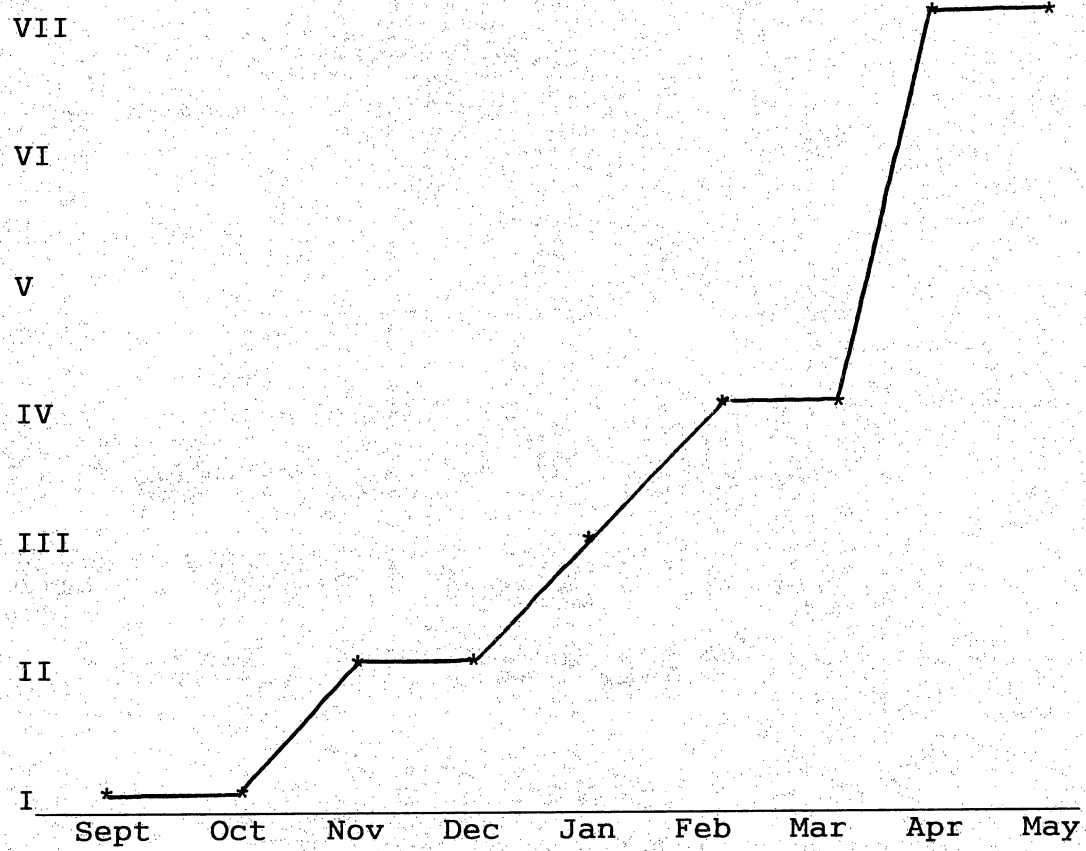
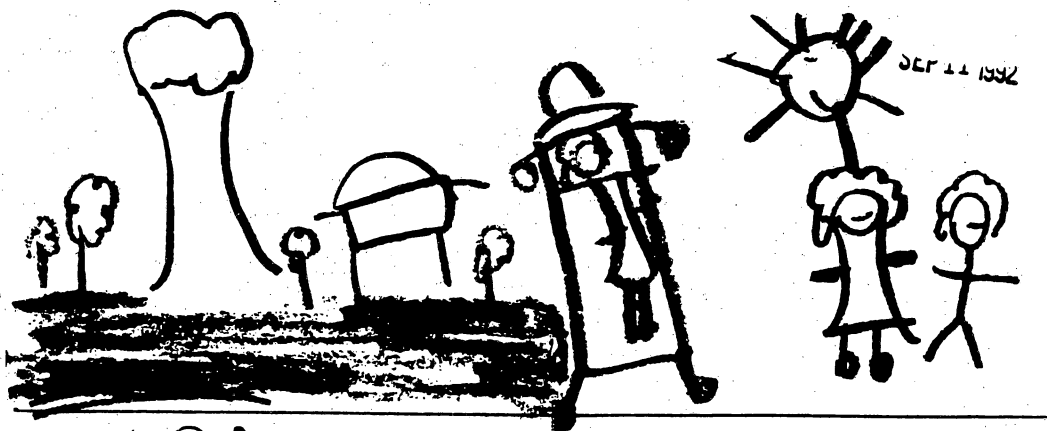


Figure 30. Student D - September Journal Entry



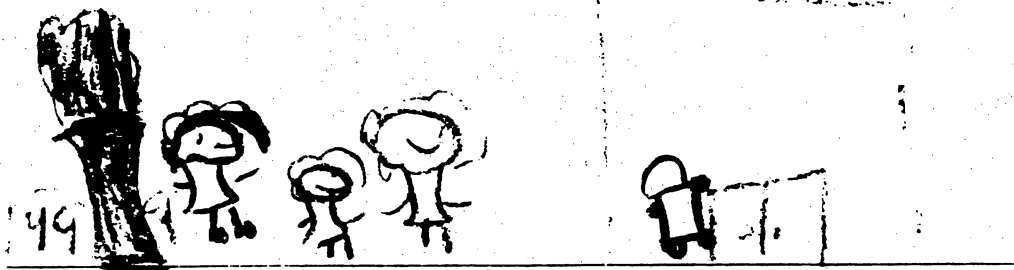
AQIS

PEJAO

I will put my baby in a stroller and
take her to the park.

Figure 31. Student D - October Journal Entry

2551 10 1992

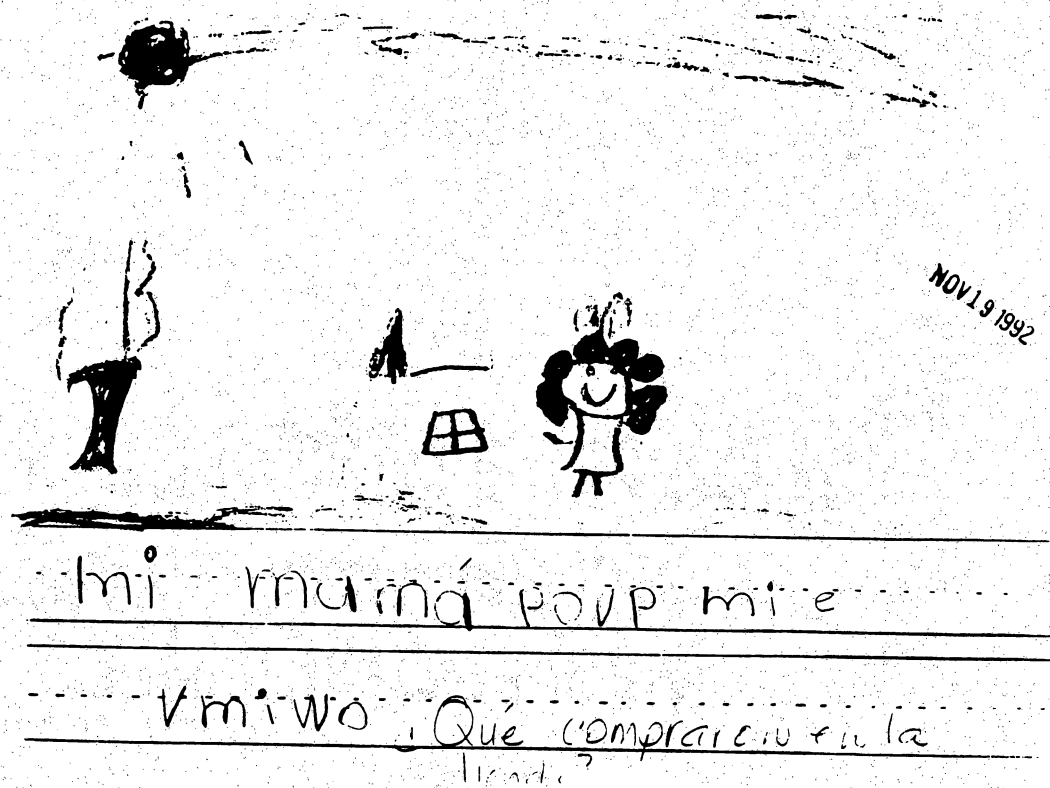


Reference: GTNH - h e H i

----- EOTIF - BAVIER - IHFORF -----

I have to say that no one has it. I have Alcohol

Figure 32. Student D - November Journal Entry



In the next writing sample, Figure 32, Renee wrote using Spanish. She has the word mi and mama in conventional spelling. Many times the words were used daily during our daily activity of the "Kindergarten News". The teacher wrote the news that children reported. The news included classroom and home experiences.

In December, Figure 33, Renee goes back to using English. She was still at the presyllabic writing system but her illustrations were more detailed. She was still spacing between groups of letters and using both uppercase and lowercase letters.

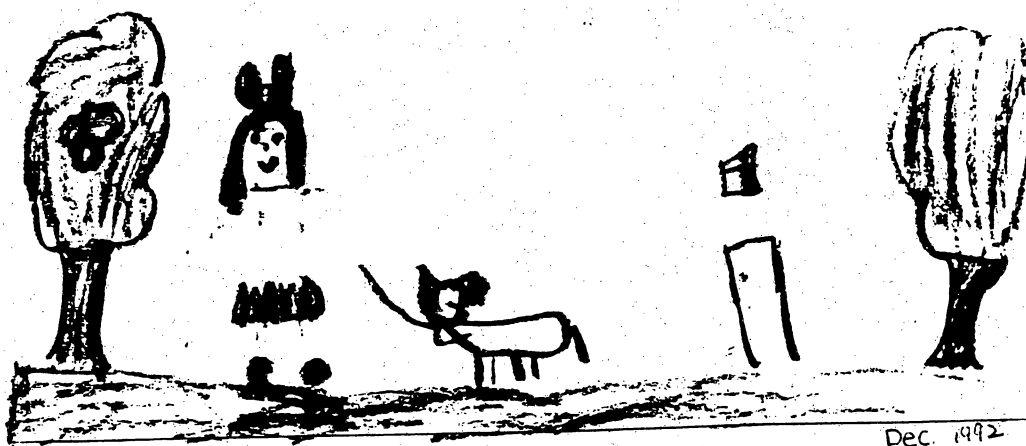
Renee continues at the first level in her January journal entry, Figure 34 and also in February, Figure 35, but now she was back to using Spanish. The teacher asked Renee to use the language that she felt more comfortable in when writing in her journal.

By March, Figure 36, her journal entry demonstrated that she was using the syllabic writing system: "Mi papa vcat fad a pkDdo" (Mi papa Vicente fue a pescar). (My father Vicente went fishing).

In April, Figure 37, Renee was back to the presyllabic.

By May, Figure 38, Renee was at the syllabic but she was using English again. "Renee See GCHgN" (Renee is swimming).

Figure 33. Student D - December Journal Entry



Renee ABWMer teinH

Why does Renee have to go inside?

Figure 34. Student D - January Journal Entry

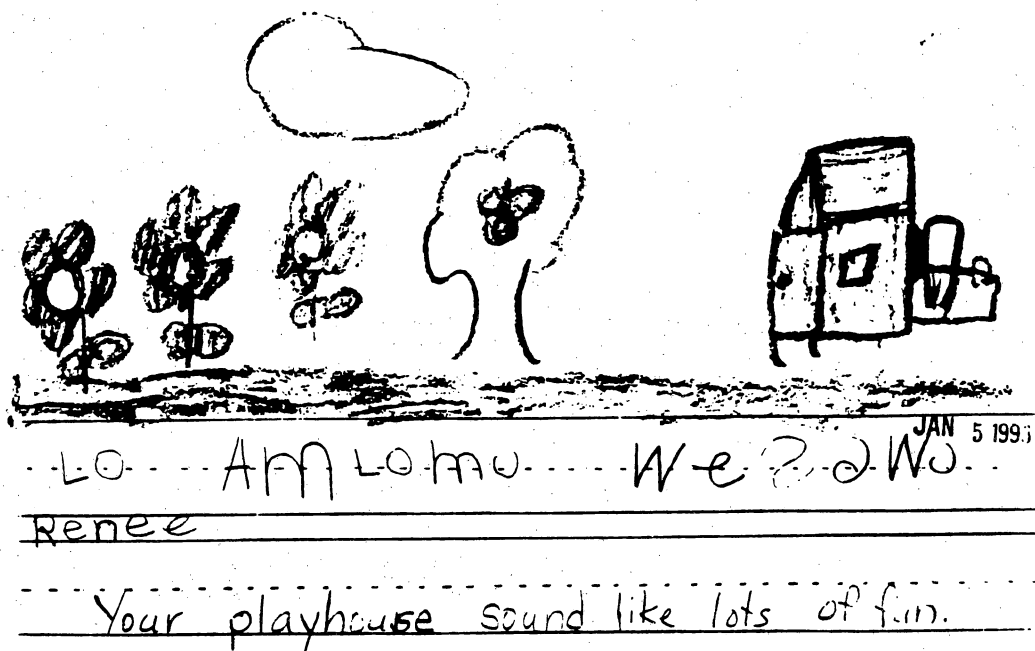


Figure 35. Student D - February Journal Entry

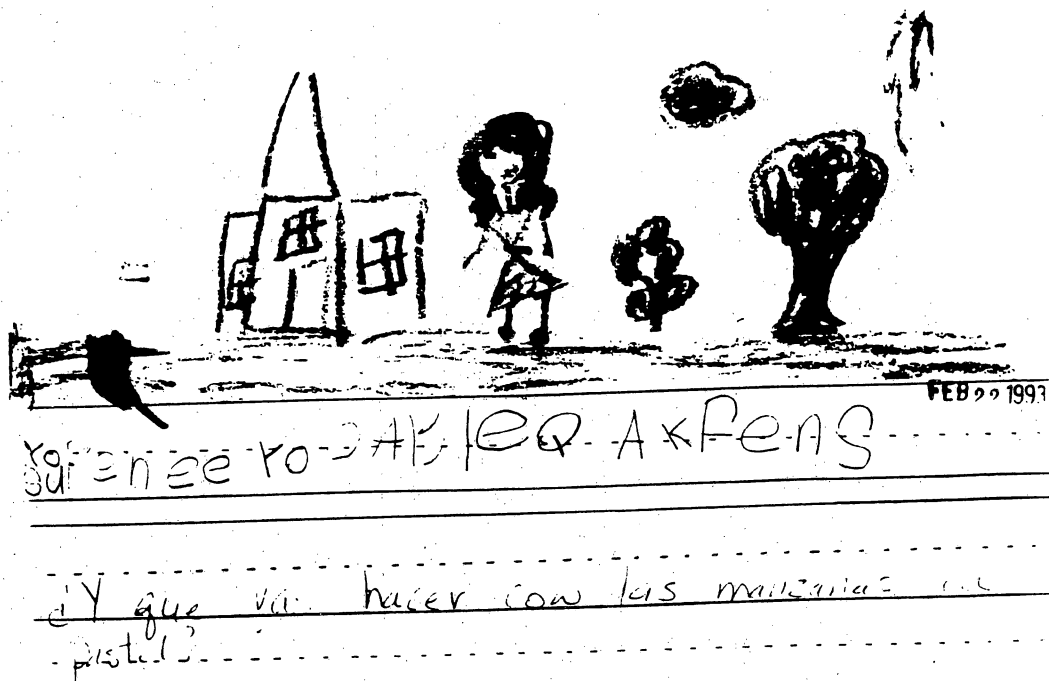
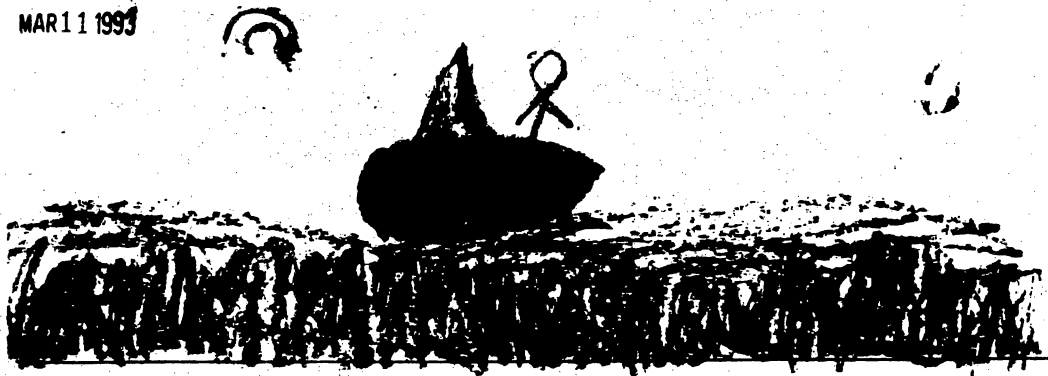


Figure 36. Student D - March Journal Entry

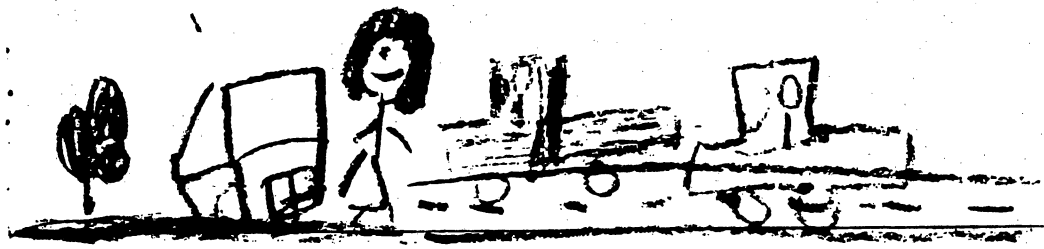
MAR 11 1993



mi papa Vcat Fao a PKDAO

Tu papa Vicente pescó muchos
pescados.

Figure 37. Student D - April Journal Entry



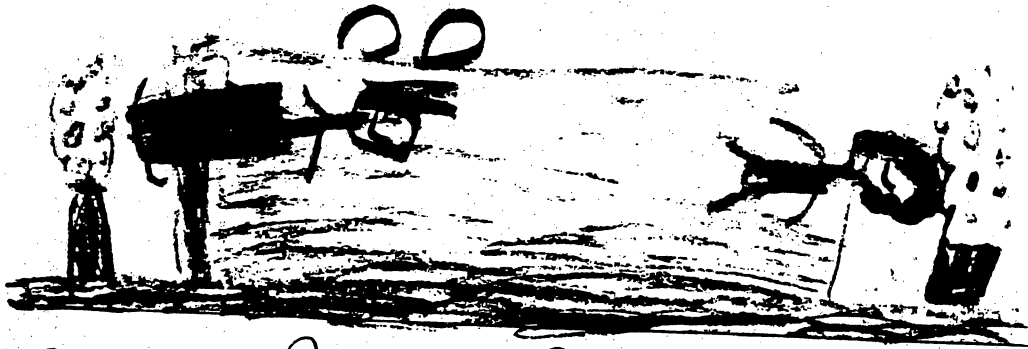
Ayer en la noche hicimos

Ayer en mi casa nosotros hicimos

carne asada para toda mi familia.

APR 12 1993

Figure 38. Student D - May Journal Entry



Renee SeeGC H&N

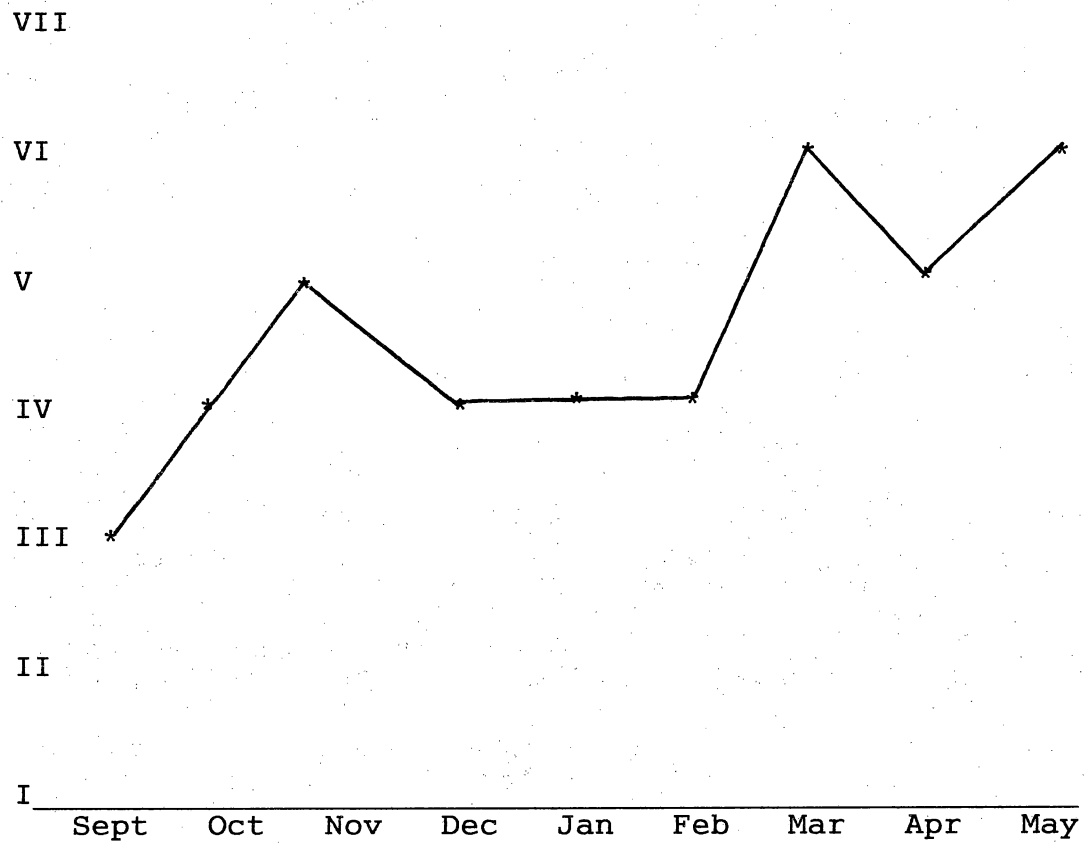
When it's very hot I like to
go swimming, too.

MAY 11 1991

Summary of progression. Renee's journal entries indicate that she stayed in the first period. She used the presyllabic and was beginning to use the syllabic in Spanish. One month she would use English and the next month Spanish. When she continued to use the Spanish language for a longer period she was beginning to use the syllabic writing system. She used letters, pseudo-words and copied words in the developmental writing strategies. (See Table 4)

Table 4

Developmental Strategies Exhibited in Journal
Entries - Student D



CHAPTER 5

DISCUSSION

Interpretation.

That by using language authentically kindergarten children can learn to write in a socially mediated context using interactive dialogue journals as seen from the case study data presented in this project.

First of all, the children entered kindergarten with some idea about the forms and function of print. Also, the evidence presented within the framework of these case studies supports the notion that children should have primary language support to facilitate writing development. The two children that used their bilingualism added rather than detracted for the child's repertoire of available language allowing for a wider range of language choice.

It should be noted that the children in some cases fluctuated between alternative writing levels and did not follow a linear pattern which they proceeded to test and refine throughout the year.

Conclusions.

In looking at the children's writing in dialogue journals it was found that children were able to take control of their own written language development by

using strategies that made the writing task easier for them. They used illustrations to assist them in the task of developing an idea for writing. In addition, children used label and words or print that surround them in their environment. All the children progressed from scribbling to writing their own ideas, depending on the level of knowledge of the written language.

Moreover, this research suggests that when children write frequently and are encouraged to use topics from their personal experiences they progress toward conventional writing.

The research also supports the use of children's primary language as a powerful strategy for writing development using interactive journals.

Implications.

This study has shown the writing development of four students over a period of almost one school year. It can be seen how these children take control of the process that is written language by delineating the scripting strategies over a period of time, as evident in their writing. In addition, there is evidence of the impact of the primary language on the writing development as has been exhibited by these four students. By abandoning the traditional educational

practice that has looked at writing as an individual act practiced in isolation and that all knowledge is within the teacher, who will impart this knowledge on the child.

Dyson (1985) stated that research on literacy has treated written language as a set of skills taught by adults in school. By shifting from an isolated skills approach of teaching writing to a more holistic approach offered by others (Bissex, 1980; Krashen, 1984; Edelsky, 1986) who view writing as an interactive meaningful process that is socially mediated.

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